

A Collection of Short Stories

by

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Valentine's Day
By Jonathan Olvera

The wind streaks across the open Valley set between two mounds and a plane.
This plane was more than new or undiscovered. It is home to a healthy group of people.
The month is February and the Seasons are turning into a more gentle side of winter. What
seemed like an eternal spell of cold temperatures was the beginning of a warmer and more gentle
sphere.

It is usual this time of year.
I wouldn't have it any other way, myself I become tired of the summer season so hot! It seems to
stretch an eternity in the range of humanity and our everyday lives.

February is welcome and the day of the cupid is soon to be upon us.

A gentle kiss of relief is Valentine's day.

It is good to be grateful today and thankful.

Thankful and Caring for a new Season, a better partner, a new venture, one's actual home.

The gifts above our head and below our feet are Grand and uncountable. I am glad for this
Valentine's day.

Thank you!

The Destitution
By Jonathan Olvera

I was making a cottage with my mother amidst the tall Pines of Moscow. It was a time of fair
season and change.

I did attend the local church services.

I was in prayer and contract.

I listened as a young man to preachers and Elders always minding the words of our sermons.

It was unfortunate the ordinance of our localities called for an assembly of men.

We assembled and came to a decision to make a good meal and prepare for a great work to be
done in our home.

This was because it was a good home.

It is America.

Many days were spent gazing at the Waters and shores that provided many healthy seasons.

In time the sky would become a road.

The land would provide contract and exchange of our good faith into America.

Far away the call of service did attract our best people and we did work according to our good
faith and meditation.

The scenery changed and the land seemed to be in abandon.

no one liked this place. It was harsh although I was determined to make it my home.

I picked a shovel up and I did dig for days until I saw a change for water.

For many days and nights I prayed for water and good finds in the place.

I found both and the Light breaking the sky after the great dragon of darkness was an amazing
sight.

I will never forget this scene I have in the land I came to after my home.

In the new venture Desolation.

A Exile of the King and a Blessing of the Angels.

The Talking Red Bird
By Jonathan Olvera

"Squack!"
"Crow!"
"Ahhhhwck!"

This was a very noisy Parrot, it was red very large red bird with very many feathers.
It was known to very many people other than they were not too many like it.
This parrot was accustomed to traveling.
I became accustomed to entertainment.

"How are you today?"
Master would ask this parrot.

"Squack!"
"Very good!" the animal replies.

The man had traveled to find a source for a rare bird like this one.
It was not sure where the bird had arrived from specifically.
Although he was very glad to have it under his roof.

"Squack!"
"Crow!"
"Ahhhhwck!"

The red bird would cry!

Making the sounds of other animals it had heard.
Like wild birds.

It was a joy to have this bird around. He did not have a name, we called him red bird.

Although he did not have a name he made very many friends.

I had to let the red bird outside, I did this very many times, he could not fly.
He did have a perch outside.

Children would come along and see this red bird he would say:
"Squack!"

"Crow!"
"Ahhhhwck!"

"How are you today?"

This was a joy, the children would cheer on the red Bird.
It was an amazing sight.
They would all giggle delighted in the scene of a red bird speaking like a man.

"Very good!" replied the children.

This red bird was welcome in our homes and he was known to many.
This bird had a good reputation and it was known to many people.
He had a peculiar likeness to a fairy tale story.
In the distant land.

This bird could speak like a man.
I will always remember him for it.

He was taken away and purchased for a very good price.

I loved him.

I can't wait to see him again.

The Price of Growth
By Jonathan Olvera

Underneath the very blue sky, there I was. Presently, the times may be very difficult in a
mathematical sense.

Many things were occurring, the banks were on impound of any land transferred they had
nothing to do. It was very much understood it was worthwhile to become educated and train in
labor.

I understood many subjects while I was growing up in this place.

I understood the pollen and the trees and also how flowers came to be.

I spent many days in prayer.

I did Fast and this was very good.

Time will always dictate that man should progress.

I saw many things that needed to be done.

It was work.

Many times I wonder when I would be delivered out of the harshness of the harsh desert, out of
the demands of a violent Market.

It was not easy to accept new faith.

It was necessary.

Although it might seem impossible to listen and be attentive.

It has to be done.

It has to be done for health.

It has to be done for education.

It has to be done for progress.

Sometimes it is difficult to listen to the most important lessons in life.

I'm grateful I did listen to the voices in the sky above who did enlighten me to become more
prepared and take pride in my work.

I will always have this in my heart.

I hope you do as well! Thank you!

Lost in Translation, Found in Japan

By Jonathan Olvera

One time I was very young and there wasn't very much opportunity in my state of residence.

I was looking for work and also a place to relocate.

There weren't very many options to take and the situation was dire.

I went to the airport looking for a Job.

and I ran into a group of people and they had fliers, they acknowledged the situation.

It was rare that people asked me if I wanted to go to Japan.

I was very embarrassed about the situation.

They invited me into a car and we went to eat burgers.

It was very clean and light.

It smelled like cheap plastic and perfume.

I liked these people.

It's like they knew me.

Three months later they asked me if I wanted to go to Japan.

I said yes!

I was so excited to be in a new place surrounded by new experiences.

I got on the flight and the people helped me every step of the way to go to Japan.

It was 13 hours!

When I got off the Airplane. I could not understand anything.

Someone told me to say "Nissin! Nissin!"

I was telling everyone "Nissin, Nissin!"

Someone told me that means soup and if I was hungry they would feed me!

I was so embarrassed I couldn't wait to go home and tell my friends!

Super Bowl LIX
By Jonathan Olvera

The air is getting hot.
"Oh man it's getting hot!" I would say.
"All that working out! The Super Bowl is almost here!"
I was so excited I didn't know what to get first Chips, Soda, or some Hamburgers.
I could ask my mother for a couple of bucks to go to the local grocer.
It would be awesome to finish a season of long hours and book study with an amazing show!

The Super Bowl is now an official Holiday.
There will be Cheerleaders!
Good sum of Women!

There would be giants playing on TV, fighting over a ball.
I was ready!
I was still thrilled from the last season of Music and new Ideas to think about in bed.

It is difficult to keep up with all the Events!
I was not an athlete although I was very excited.

I was doing everything to go to the Super Bowl!
In the end I will be excited to see a good game and eat some Chips with some Hot chili beans
and hot cheese!

I wish Everyone a good game.

The air is growing hot.
"Oh man, it's getting hot!" I would say.
"All that working out! The Super Bowl is almost here!"
I was so excited that I didn't know what to get first—chips, soda, or some hamburgers.
Maybe I could ask my mother for a couple of bucks to go to the local grocer.
It would be awesome to finish a season of long hours and book study with an amazing show!

The Super Bowl is now an official holiday.
There will be cheerleaders!
A good number of women!

There would be giants playing on TV, fighting over a ball.

I was ready!

I was still thrilled from the last season of music and new ideas to think about in bed.

It's difficult to keep up with all the events!

I wasn't an athlete, but I was still very excited.

I did everything I could to go to the Super Bowl!

In the end, I'll be excited to watch a great game, eat some chips with hot chili beans and melted cheese!

I wish everyone a good game!

Grandma's Magic
By Jonathan Olvera

Grandma was awesome; she always had the best ideas when I was 5. Everything that we did together was fun!

I loved baking cookies with her and playing outside with the dogs that were always at Grandma's house.

I always read the fairy tales in the book collection and spent time thinking of stories I could write!

I even believe in magic!

It could have been my grandmother's crazy antics like playing the Electric guitar or Making Exotic foods.

It has been exciting.

I have an Idea that I can do many things like travel the globe.

I can see many countries and write books everywhere I go.

Colors and chords!

All the time I have learned.

I will make my Grandmother proud.

Axolotl

By Jonathan Olvera

paedomorphic salamander

Axolotl was a small salamander; it meant he was able to float through ponds and rivers out to the Ocean if needed.

Really Axolotl was allergic to Ocean water.

The best thing to look forward to is " the sun shining down through the water." thought Axolotl. Axolotl was a boy who was used to touching the surface of the water and feeling the vacuum of a black sphere tugging at the underwater world.

"I see you!" Axolotl exclaimed and bubbles were ejected from around his smile. He could feel it was real, a black star or a Center sphere of energy different to the Sun or the Earth. It was important because Axolotl always thought about his shape and how he became this funny salamander.

Could it have to do with the Sun or the Giant black sphere in the sky above the vacuum.

This made Axolotl dance and swim.

He was excited!

Stones were everywhere in the pond, sweet algae was forming out of the dirt and fungus gatherer on the water and multiplying in the sun.

The days were splendid.

I liked watching Axolotl. He was my pet.

He is what is called a paedomorphic salamander.

I will always like my pet friend.

The Cow and the Cucumber

By Jonathan Olvera

"Mooo!"

"Mooo!"

"Mooo!"

The cow was heard in the bright stead of the morning.

His name was Clover and the pasture he stood on was like his name.

It was very inspiring for me, a man of age Thirty to see this great animal who shared much of the likeness and desires of the company to which it was accustomed to.

"Good Morning Clover!" I would exclaim to the cow.

"You are never unnoticed." I told him.

Clover was attended to by a Ranch attendant and he was very eager to sell the feed for this Cow.

It was no more than forty dollars I did pay to feed the Cow - Cucumbers.

The cow, no stranger to the fondness of a shared emotion between two of the same stead and pasture, made his way over to me although there was a fence that ended the pasture and grew into the concrete slab that was a foundation to my living quarters.

He was close and the Cow Clover shook his head up and down asking for food.

Close by the door was the box of cucumbers Clover had seen by the door.

I walked over and I grabbed a cucumber.

I walked back to the fence and I gave it to Clover. He had a big mouth and it was lively so lively to me it seemed animated.

It was funny.

The cow was so good company and silly with gestures it made me think what more do animals like clover the cow have to offer away from the human nonsense of every day.

Clover liked cucumbers and I liked spending time with Him.

I gave him three more cucumbers.

Clover said "Mooo!" and I said "Goodbye clover!"

Clover was a good friend to make. I will always remember this Cow Pet.

Moo!

Moo!

Moo!

Clover's call echoed across the bright morning sky.

He stood proudly in the pasture, his name fitting the lush green field beneath his hooves. As a thirty-year-old man, I found something inspiring about this great animal—his calm presence, his simple joys, and his easy companionship.

"Good morning, Clover!" I called out cheerfully. "You are never unnoticed."

Clover was well cared for by the ranch attendant, who eagerly sold me his feed. I paid forty dollars—no more, no less—for a box of cucumbers, Clover's favorite treat.

Despite the fence separating us, Clover and I shared a silent understanding. He stood near the barrier where the pasture met the concrete foundation of my living quarters, bobbing his head up and down in anticipation. His dark eyes flickered toward the box of cucumbers sitting by my door.

Smiling, I walked over, picked one up, and returned to the fence. As I held it out, Clover eagerly took it, his large mouth animated and full of life. It was funny, almost cartoonish in the way he chewed—so expressive, so full of personality.

Spending time with Clover made me wonder—what more do animals like him offer beyond the daily chaos of human life? In his simple joy, there was peace, honesty, and an unspoken connection that required no words.

Clover loved cucumbers. And I loved spending time with him.

I handed him three more.

"Moo!" he bellowed, his voice deep and content.

"Goodbye, Clover!" I said with a laugh.

He was a good friend. A friend I would always remember.

The Great Galactic Streak
By Jonathan Olvera

The Sky Opened Suddenly the Halo of Sunlight began to warp around what seemed to be a warp hole.

"Come to me!" A voice called out.

"What is going on?" Exclaimed Muhammed.

Swirling now in a clockwise circle and expanding a Nuclear Tunnel into another platform a force with no gravity pulled Muhammed out of his porch into the Portal.

"Whoa!!" "Whoa!" Exclaimed Mohammed.

What came in was all that remained on the other platform, a Grey Stone smooth and repelling the surface of his skin.

"Oh what the heck!" "I can't stay here, I have to go home!"

The tail of this Vortex now spinning above his head in what seemed like a random result fruited the oddest of all in the personal inventory of Mohammed: a pencil from School, a sheet of his bed, a joint and flint stone lock.

This was incredible! It was happening.

The colors and signatures around Mohammed were changing rapidly on the Flay grey surface.

"That is Amazing!"

"That is Very Terrifying!"

The colors changed from every day colors to colors he never imagined existed. He was changing dimensions.

"BOOM!"

The whole scene fried out .

"OUCH!"

Mohammed felt the grey stone shatter underneath his feet into what seemed to be the concrete on his porch.

"I'm back home here." thought Mohammed.

Until he looked up and saw a Flying Saucer in the air.

"What is going on!" Exclaimed Mohammed.

He went inside and nothing was the same.

"I'm losing my gosh darn mind!" Mohammed said to himself.

"Is this my house?"

"Mohammed, what is going on with you?" Asked his father.
He was naked and a Flying Saucer was in the air.

"Dad!" "What are you doing!" asked Mohammed.
"What the Heck!"
BOOM! BLAT!!

The Noise was heard as a hundred flying saucers were gathering into formation.
"What are you doing Mohammed?"

"This is a nudist community and I have to live naked."
"The aliens are now in control of all activities on Earth."
"Take your clothes off as well Mohammed, they are not needed during the alien invasion."

"Really!" asked Mohammed.

"Yes, son," said Father.

Mohammed took off all his clothes and was now nude.
"Everything we will now have to do nude, there is no longer any need for clothing."

Mohammed was very excited by this sudden change.

He walked into his home now nude with his father.

It was a very funny Change!

The sky opened suddenly, and the halo of sunlight began to warp around what seemed to be a wormhole.

"Come to me!" a voice called out.

"What is going on?" exclaimed Mohammed.

Swirling in a clockwise motion, the vortex expanded into a nuclear tunnel leading to another platform. A force with no gravity pulled Mohammed off his porch and into the portal.

"Whoa!! Whoa!" he shouted.

As he landed, he found himself standing on a smooth, grey stone that repelled the surface of his skin. It was all that remained on this strange platform.

"Oh, what the heck! I can't stay here—I have to go home!"

Above his head, the tail of the vortex continued spinning. Then, in what seemed like a random phenomenon, items from Mohammed's personal belongings materialized: a school pencil, a sheet from his bed, a joint, and a flintstone lock.

This was incredible—it was happening.

The colors and energy signatures around Mohammed shifted rapidly on the flat, grey surface beneath him.

"That is amazing!"

"That is very terrifying!"

The colors changed from ordinary hues to shades he had never imagined. He was shifting dimensions.

"BOOM!"

The whole scene flickered and then fizzled out.

"OUCH!"

Mohammed suddenly felt the grey stone beneath him shatter, and he landed on what seemed to be the concrete of his porch.

"I'm back home," he thought.

But as he looked up, a flying saucer hovered in the sky.

"What is going on?!" he exclaimed.

He rushed inside—but nothing was the same.

"I'm losing my gosh darn mind!" Mohammed muttered.

"Is this even my house?"

"Mohammed, what is going on with you?" his father asked.

Mohammed suddenly realized—he was completely naked. And outside, more flying saucers filled the sky.

"Dad! What are you doing?!" Mohammed asked in confusion.

"What the heck?!"

BOOM! BLAT!!

A thunderous noise echoed as a hundred flying saucers gathered into formation.

"What are you doing, Mohammed?" his father asked calmly.

"This is a nudist community now, and we have to live naked," his father explained.

"The aliens are in control of all activities on Earth."

"Take your clothes off as well, Mohammed. They are no longer needed during the alien invasion."

"Really?" Mohammed asked, stunned.

"Yes, son," his father confirmed.

Without hesitation, Mohammed stripped off all his clothes, now fully nude.

"From now on, we must do everything in the nude. There is no longer any need for clothing."

Mohammed walked into his home, now nude, alongside his father.

It was a very funny change!

A Place Held Near
By Jonathan Olvera

This is a song I used to hear sung by one of the women in the local churches in my hometown. It is one of my favorites and It reminds me of angels hidden in plain sight.

The strings in the air hummed with joy!
All the men Re- joiced!
All my girls re - joiced!
For today we are blessed with sweet air.
Music played in my ear. Say my name to all my dear Angel friends.

I can hear God call my name!
Say again!
Say Aloud!
You're my son!
Grace, Love and Cheer!
I am here for my son.
Can't you see all I give for you to accept.

Look again at the Place I hold near you!
Young, fond and Sure of you.
Find it good I have blessed all your years.
In your hands I have placed my faith.

It is always a pleasure to share music with good people.

I Hate Reading the Bible (Until I Didn't)

By Jonathan Olvera

"Oh I hate reading the bible!" I used to say to myself.

"I'll never read that book completely!"

It was not always that I agreed with the entire routine: Go to school, Attend Church, Cut down on bad language and exercise.

I wasn't a Jesus freak or a ghost hunter, although there was something greater than the frame I was receiving.

I could see it in the sky.

The grandeur of the Night and the contrast of the breaking day - It was speaking to me.

"Oh my gosh!"

I used to think to myself.

"Throw me a sign and let me see you!" I asked the Great untamed Pitch black expanse and the Echoes of a Million Tonnes of water.

I opened the bible through an idea to be more learned in scriptures in this manner I reasoned to myself the voice of guidance would be with me.

All the days I had accepted malice and wrongful ideas were behind me.

I accepted the church.

I accepted the bible and I rebuke evil.

In constant exercise and prayer I found the strength to push forward in this task and I did not regret it.

I was looking for an answer and the bible provided that for me.

I know I find my strength in prayer and exercise, study and work. I am pleased to have read the bible and Understand the message of the angels.

Heaven's Treasure Box
By Jonathan Olvera

The Sky was lightened by the starlight in the night sky. It was a usual scene of grandeur in the rock planet earth.

Time is a sense of change and many occurrences on the face of this creation.
It reacted over so many times to the words of the great creator.

Once earth was a ball of fire, It was now becoming a Visible friend of sensical materials.

It was strange to see this on earth and the stars in the sky made safe passage for the kind works of the
Guardians of The Creator.

The stars were many different colors.
White, Red, Yellow, Green, and blue.

They burned with the core of earth and made soft songs within the guidance of other giants like Jupiter
and Mars.

Dancing in the pool of memories of the grand Work of The universe was all life was ready for.

It was awesome!
The creator made this and the Angels made it safe for the dancing fireballs to retire into the center of the
earth and burn until the fuel had exhausted itself.

The face of the earth is full of thousands of blessings for Us to be thankful for.
The angels make all of it possible.

From Struggle to Strength: Overcoming Obesity

By Jonathan Olvera

Hello, Readers,

I have a story to share—one about my journey as an overweight person and how I found hope.

For a long time, food was more than just sustenance to me—it was my comfort, my reassurance that everything would be okay. The best part of my day was indulging in sugary biscuits for breakfast and cereal. I craved pork rinds, different kinds of chips, and soda.

Meanwhile, I lost many friends to the dark forces of the world. I saw people consumed by destructive paths, and in my loneliness, I turned to food.

Eat, eat, eat—I ate all the time.

As the years passed, I gained a significant amount of weight. By the time I reached thirty, I could no longer stand the reflection staring back at me. My body felt like a prison, weighed down by excess skin and fat, making me uncomfortable in my own skin.

I tried to lose weight, but my efforts seemed futile—until I turned to the Bible. It opened my eyes to the reality that my unhealthy relationship with food was harming me, not helping me. I realized I was fighting a spiritual battle as much as a physical one.

Work kept me busy, especially since there was a large steel order at the site where I was employed. But deep down, I knew I needed more than just a job—I needed a change.

For a year, I wrestled with the idea that I wasn't powerless. I had options. I started praying, meditating, and learning how to fast. Soon, I found myself attending church.

It took great courage to admit to my elders that I struggled with obesity and was considering surgery to reclaim my health.

Determined to make a change, I enrolled in an online school. I viewed my refrigerator as my enemy, a constant temptation that I had to overcome.

One day, while sorting through my mail, I came across a contact for a local surgeon who was willing to help me. Before long, I was under the scalpel, and the fat that had threatened my life and sanity was finally gone.

Now, I have hope for the future. I have so much to look forward to, and for the first time in a long while, I feel free.

Thank you, readers, for your support.

Bubbles: The Chimp Who Changed My Perspective

Bubbles was a chimpanzee born with two round, golden ears that resembled balls of sunlight. His full coat of dark, strong hair contrasted with his bare, oddly shaped face, giving him a unique and striking appearance.

His eyes held a depth that spoke volumes—not just about the chimpanzee he was, but also about the soul he seemed to carry within him.

His mother had darker skin, and Bubbles noticed this.

I noticed this.

It was during my journey to Kenya and the African plains that I first encountered a monkey. I found it fascinating that primates had made their home in Africa. Perhaps it was the abundant vegetation or the steady food supply that made the land so welcoming—a place where survival was almost promised by nature's provisions.

Bubbles belonged to a group of chimpanzees I deeply admired. In some way, I saw reflections of my own nature in them. To me, Bubbles was more than just an animal; he was a sign—an answer to my prayers, a silent assurance from the Creator.

I began calling him my pet, not in possession, but in affection. Our bond grew, and through him, I learned about innocence, curiosity, and the beauty of growing up.

Bubbles was a strikingly handsome young chimp, and I couldn't help but admire him.

Unfortunately, the path I was destined to follow led me away from the pastures of Chad and Central Africa. My journey took me to the United States, where my focus shifted to studying microbes and geology. Yet, no matter how far I traveled, the time I spent with Bubbles and his mother remains a cherished memory—a lesson in connection, wonder, and the simple joy of companionship.

Thank you, dear reader!

The Spirit of Saint Nicholas in the Southwest

By Jonathan Olvera

It was a bright and sunny afternoon as the year drew to a close. The sun began to cool, signaling a change in the season. In the vast southwest territory, the people endured the heat but held strong in their faith—faith in their work, in their homes, and in the kindness of Saint Nicholas.

Saint Nicholas had visited before, during the time of snow and abundant water. Oh, how the people labored under the sun! They worked in schools, in the zoo, in the kitchen—everywhere. And yet, no matter how hot the days became, they never forgot that Saint Nicholas had a home in the North Pole.

The animals and critters of the land had their place, too, just as those in the North Pole did. In the southwest, the people knew of the endless cool days that graced the Arctic, where treasures of the Earth lay preserved beneath the ice.

Together, they honored Saint Nicholas, for his work in the North Pole was never-ending. The animals listened to him, as did the angels in the sky. The lights of heaven guided Santa's helpers, ensuring they made the right choices. And now, there was a list—a record of those who had behaved.

Saint Nicholas, or Santa Claus as some called him, had the power to prove his magic. If everyone behaved, he could ready his sleigh, ascend into the sky, and visit every household on Earth in just one night.

The North Pole was frigid—so cold that it preserved Saint Nicholas and his faithful workers. Yet, despite the icy air, he found warmth in small joys. Guided by the celestial lights, alongside the critters and workers of this planet, he delighted in hot drinks—coffee, cocoa, and sweet pastries. These simple treats fueled his spirit, helping to keep boys and girls on the path of goodness.

Saint Nicholas is always at work, spreading treats of sugar, the light of the sky, and the blessings of creatures from every home that believes in kindness.

In the southwest, the heat can be relentless. The work never stops. But in the midst of it all, there is always room for a good attitude, a friendly heart, and love for one's neighbor. The critters, the workers, and even Saint Nicholas himself will remember those who are kind.

So be good. Listen to your parents. And in time, Saint Nicholas will visit, bringing warmth, joy, and the sweet taste of hot drinks and pastries on a more favorable day.

The Night of Shadows and Sweets

By Jonathan Olvera

The days were scorching, and the nights were dark. It was time for the sun to fade, making way for the long-awaited night.

The little critters craved more sugar. The pumpkins were ripe and ready to grow. After a year of hard work under the relentless sun, the people grew uneasy as shadows stretched beneath the moonlight.

Tricksters were preparing, donning their costumes, ready to scare the darkness away.

The night was near—the night when everyone would disguise themselves, moving from door to door, collecting colorful candies while driving away evil spirits. This was the night to fill bags with sweets and treats, to wear masks and costumes, and to revel in the magic of Halloween.

The streets would glow with shifting lights as the children took over the darkness, playing freely, knowing nothing could defeat them on this night. The hotter the sun had burned through the year, the greater their hunger for sugar and adventure.

Ghosts and pumpkins would appear, wizards and witches would stir their bubbling cauldrons, and skeletons would whisper tales of tricks and treats from ages past. It was Halloween. A night to embrace the eerie and step into the unknown.

On this night, anything would be possible—one could soar through the sky on a broomstick or hear the calls of mysterious creatures from the shadows. The hounds would howl, the cats would prowl, and the air would crackle with an eerie excitement.

It would be spooky. It would be thrilling. Tricks would be played, and sugar would be devoured.

As Halloween draws near, take heed and prepare yourself. The shadows have lingered all year under the moonlight, but now it is time to send them away.

Good luck, and Happy Halloween!

A Dog from the Stars:

Woof! Woof!

By Jonathan Olvera

I wag my tail and wake up beside my partner. I have many plans for us today. Before the sun rises into the sky, I should wake him up. I should wake his mother too. I am excited for the day ahead!

I come from another place among the stars. My home is much smaller than this one. One day, I will take a man with me, and together, we will do many things.

It was long, long ago when I first arrived on this planet. I was following a stone. That stone led me here, and now I live among men. It is in my best interest to understand their species—to observe, to learn. And when the time is right, I will take one with me. It will be helpful for my home.

But I must be careful. Man must not notice. I study them closely, keeping track of their ways through the fur I shed. I use my mind to understand their behavior.

I have a dog, and that dog is man.

It will be a long time before the portal opens again. When it does, I will choose my companion and bring him to my small home among the stars. Our stars are much dimmer than the sun here. But for now, I am here, and I will take my mission seriously.

I will run, I will play, I will taste, smell, and drink the sweet waters of this world.

"Bark! Bark!" I call, and man knows I need his attention.

"Woof! Woof!" I say, and everyone understands me.

Here, I will have fun with humans and small critters alike. I will howl at the moon and bark at the sun. I enjoy being a dog on planet Earth.

A Good Friend.

Guidance from the Heavens

By Jonathan Olvera

This was a time in the history of mainland America—the Americas. It was a busy time for men, while women and children found comfort in the innocence of shelter. The work had to be done. Many days, the labor and order of this work were kept secret, and men had to battle for their purpose—to be useful among the cement and the animals in captivity.

Yet, I found hope. It shimmered in the stars above the ground. That light guided me as I sifted through the earth, searching for gold. I found work, though many others were less fortunate.

But I did not even want to work.

Imagine not wanting to be in your own skin, longing to escape to a faraway land, to run and never look back.

I made time to study the Scriptures, to immerse myself in the Bible. Passage after passage, I sought understanding, using my wit and faith to grasp the depth of its words. Every day, I saw the angels and the guardian beasts of heaven reveal themselves to me. My belief grew stronger with each reading. My faith never wavered.

I came to understand that men are carnivores, bound by time and our place in creation. Cattle must be used for food. And so, I pray, asking the angels to bless my hands and my home, for there is always work to be done. It is a battle to rise each day and care for the flocks of the pastures God has created.

The greatness of the angels, both on earth and in the sky, has inspired me to write of the **guidance** they provide in my exercise, in my health, and in my spirit.

I pray and plead that everyone may find a place to kneel before God—to seek this holy guidance, to receive the breath of the Holy Ghost, and to embrace the blessing of eternity in the grace of our Creator and the warm embrace of the angels in the sky.

The Magic of Fall

By Jonathan Olvera

The sun rises, casting its warm beams over the land. The year is nearly at its end—it's September. I have stayed positive all year long, looking forward to every celebration.

The seasons are changing, and the sun's intensity is finally easing, bringing cooler days. It has been hot for so long! As the temperature drops, I dream of growing pumpkins. But they're all sold out! Everyone is eager to decorate, to compete, to take pride in their autumn displays.

There's so much to do—Autumn is coming! The leaves will turn golden and red. Ghosts and goblins will make their appearance. Pumpkins will be carved, and my costume will be ready for Halloween.

After Halloween, the focus shifts to feasting. Meals will be carefully prepared, berries blended with sugar to make jams, biscuits baked fresh, and leftover meats turned into rich, savory gravy. Cranberries will be enjoyed, and the lengthening shadows will cool the earth.

It's so exciting! Knowing the sun will take its brief rest, that winter will soon arrive. I'll wrap myself in a warm blanket, drink the hot chocolate I've been saving all year, and make rice pudding—what a treat!

Soon, Santa Claus will work his magic in a single night. This season reminds us to celebrate change, to savor new flavors, to appreciate the shifting colors of the world. I love celebrations. The deep oranges, warm browns, golden yellows, and rich reds of fall fill me with joy. In winter, I embrace the forest greens, the dark tones, the comforting spices of the season.

Then, the new year will arrive, bringing wonder. I will watch the stars soar across the sky, their light shining down on all of us, just like a dear friend's presence during the holidays.

Birthdays are special, but there's something magical about the earth completing its journey around the sun. Every celebration feels more meaningful.

I reflect on all of this—there's only one day left until October.

I am grateful. Grateful for another year, another chance to face challenges, another opportunity to embrace life's changes.

Summer is over. It's time to prepare for autumn.

I can't wait!

The Power of Habits

By Jonathan Olvera

Life is supposed to be simple. But the truth is, it's not—at least not all the time. People struggle, just like I do, to take care of the things that need to be done. It's difficult. Sometimes, it's even scary.

I had to make a decision. I was going to be strong—for myself. That's when I discovered something important: I had to learn the difference between a habit and a choice. I needed to change. I needed to grow up. I had to figure out what would help me move forward.

As a young man, I needed strength. I needed work. So, I started making extra money by cleaning. In my sober mind, I realized I was capable of so much more. I could think. I could communicate. I had good ideas. I could write books.

I'm grateful to be on this journey early in life. I know that developing good habits—engaging in meaningful conversations, being good company, and making smart choices—makes a real difference.

Health is something you only get one chance at. At the end of the day, even if you bring nothing home, you still carry the decisions you made to maintain a healthy, whole character. That realization changed me—not just for myself, but for those around me, even my cat and dog.

Everyday life is full of obstacles—washing the dishes, looking for work, staying clean, taking a shower, using proper language, picking up the yard, and being a good neighbor. Sometimes, habits can hold you back. But I've learned to keep a strong attitude.

It's not always easy to stay positive, but I made a decision to do just that. I've been working on it for a long time, and I like who I'm becoming.

I'm going to keep this attitude.

That's my decision.

President's Day!

By Jonathan Olvera

February was coming soon and the Excitement in the air was a joyous Sphere in the Local Venues,
Restaurants, and plazas.
The People had their season to review the local policies and study the new contracts for the new seasons
to come.
It was awesome.
A new leader was elected!
The POTUS it was called had taken office.
"Nice!"
"Awesome!"
"Cool!"
People would comment.
The times of the Territory were rough as always, decisions and transfers were always being debated and
fulfilled for the best outcomes.
It was a very delicate and long task to fulfill, everyone would have a good input to have by President's
Day.
All the season Young Men celebrated and gathered.
The new president had many things to do!
It was getting done.
This year will be one of the most memorable presidents' days!
"Hooray!" "Hooray!" "Hooray!" I shouted! It is almost president's day!

The Accidental Prophet

By Dmitri Volkov

When I first arrived in Central America from the cold, unforgiving lands of Eastern Russia, I had only one goal: to make an honest living writing. I submitted my work to countless magazines, desperate to see my name in print. I called my pieces "scripts" and "blogs," though most editors called them "unpublishable."

Undeterred, I poured my soul into my writing, blending science and religion in ways that would either enlighten readers or deeply confuse them. To my surprise, people actually started reading my work. Encouraged by this, I paid little attention to the who and why, too busy basking in the joy of finally having an audience.

Then, exactly a year later, something strange happened—I was contacted by members of a local church. Not only had they been reading my work, but they had also turned my writings into music. Yes, music. Songs based on my ramblings about the universe and divine energy were now being performed in churches.

I was honored. I was flattered. I was also slightly terrified.

They asked if I was a good person. A suspiciously specific question. Then they started investigating my background, as if I were some kind of spiritual leader. Before I knew it, people were treating me like a prophet. Me! A guy who once got lost in his own apartment because the power went out.

Naturally, I told them I was, indeed, a very good person (I mean, I don't kick puppies or anything), and I promised to be a character they could believe in.

Looking back, it was a long, strange journey from Moscow to Central America, where people not only published my work but also turned me into an accidental religious icon.

And to think—I just wanted to be a blogger.

The Well of Change

By Jonathan Olvera

Changes occur in life many times. The air was thick with the exhaust of the nearby ocean and the volcanic activity beneath the small settlement.

Life revolved around the trade of items made from stone and water ventures. Trade was a daily routine, an unchanging rhythm of existence.

Although this was regular and seemed interminable, the social dance was abruptly interrupted by plumes of smoke and extreme temperatures. Times were changing.

It was a time when I had to take control of the future that lay before me. My daily routine became a personal obstacle course; I set challenges for myself constantly. I began to see the benefits of progress in the stone trade and in art.

I ensured my appearance, traded with good measure, and achieved social stature. My life was no longer just social—it became spiritual.

I prayed and worked.
I meditated and wrote.

Work was something that would pay off. I dedicated myself to digging a well, believing that one day, I would reach water—clean water.

I was joined by many people of different nationalities, and they assisted me. We traded and worked. We also made good friends.

One day, I reached water. I called everyone to prepare the well and step back, for soon it would fill. And it did!

My friends were amazed. At the end of our hard work, we had a well—and much water to sustain our trades.

It all began as a small idea—a seed of good faith and hard work. But in the end, it made a difference, proving that change, when pursued with perseverance, leads to something greater.

Thanks for reading.

The Divide: A Future of Order and Wilderness

By Jonathan Olvera

Our nation is a vast, flat surface surrounded by water.
Large and circular.

It was founded by men who mined gold and other precious resources.

Now, it is the year 4000, though time holds little importance to the inhabitants of **5-3009-1**—the name given to the Rock, a place containing all the elements necessary to sustain life. It stands in the void, surrounded by colossal objects scattered across the sky.

Time, as we know it, has been predicted to end and begin again. Religion shifts and evolves.

In our era, humanity has endured countless sacrifices.

The trees have withered.

Animals are slaughtered.

Men and children perish in endless wars.

Life fades, locked away in safekeeping.

The age of ignorance has ended.

Excess is inevitable, yet excess itself has become a resource.

"Oh my."

"How terrible."

James had slept all day, his head aching as he drifted through thought.

"How are you today, James?" his mother asked.

"My head hurts."

"Have you been drinking water?"

"Yes, Mother," James replied. **"I've just been thinking a lot."**

Adjusting to life in America had been difficult for him. The world of 4000 was far removed from the society that had existed 2000 years before. Back then, trash littered the streets, and wooden, disposable structures defined the landscape.

The government had reshaped everything, eliminating waste and transforming society into a rigid, institutional system. Order through radical change—this was the new trend.

"What are you thinking about? You're making me worried," his mother said.

"I have so much to do and not enough time in the day," James answered.

10,000 miles away, near the edge of the conceivable world—known simply as **the End**—the ground shifted. Rocks piled high, animals were counted and stored, and lizard-like creatures roamed the wilderness. Sand and stone were shaped and fused together, building something meant to last.

This was another society, one rooted in hunting, labor, and blood sacrifice. No one dared cross the boundary of rubble and dust. The debris was all that remained of a world destroyed and reshaped—a world that sought to endure beyond both order and chaos.

It was said that angels had appeared to many before the great destruction. Blood sacrifice had become law—a sacred act meant to bring humanity closer to these celestial beings.

On the other side of the boundary, however, the new society was sterile and disheartening—a lifeless reflection of the desolation it sought to replace.

**“The times are changing.
We can live here, sacrifice our food, and hunt monsters,”** Bill said.
“Out there, we are wild. On Judgment Day, we can either be hungry children or prisoners.”

“It still sounds radical, even today,” Charlie replied.

He hesitated before asking, **“Can I ask you something? Have you ever seen one?”**

“Seen what?” Bill asked.

“An angel.”

Angels were not a rare sight.
Not in this time.
Not in any time.

This was an era of upheaval and struggle.
The laws that governed the planet had shaped the lives of many.
It was consuming.
The spoken word of God had been handed down to men on both sides.
And now, the angels watched.

On one side, wilderness.
On the other, institutional society.

This vision was given to the people of our time.

How do we interpret this message from the angels?
Are there other stories to be gathered?
And what can we learn from them?

Whispers of Lycea: A Feline's Mission

By Jonathan Olvera

The night was damp, and the air carried a promise—one meant for a cat like myself.

I could sense it with my whiskers and the feather-like hairs between my paws. This world, this *Sphere*, was unlike anything I had known on Lycea, the Exo-planet.

The air here has been kind to me.

"It's a little rough." Or *"Meew,"* I whine to the humans.

They know me as a feline, a cat. But I am more than that. My genetic sequence enhances my activity on this planet, making me more aware, more *productive*. I can listen, I can interact, I can *understand*.

I am on a religious expedition, tasked with investigating violence, disappearances, and the nature of carnivorous instincts. My teeth differ from those of my humanoid hosts—some might even call them *vampiric*.

Back on Lycea, there was talk of crude parcels, rolled stones, and the ambitious, rabid leaders of Earth. These discussions stirred the other cats.

We purr, we meow, we taste the air.

The deity of our stone has always protected us. Perhaps Earth, too, holds a purpose for us—though how, we have yet to discover.

Becoming familiar with humans was unsettling at first. Their towering forms startled me. The space in our solar system had shaped Lyceans to be smaller, more agile, more attuned to the unseen forces.

But still, it will be fun to *meow* and *listen* to these creatures.

Soon, the so-called *Sun* will rise in the sky—a terrifying thought for vampire-like cats such as myself. But as always, we will resume our mission, serving our masters and leaders on Lycea.

It will be an adventure.

And I am, above all, a friendly feline companion.

"Meow!"

A Hilarious Fall: The Christmas Morning Mishap

Logan Andrews

"What is going on?" I hollered! I was dizzy from the fumes of adhesive and the ongoing construction in the city. Christmas was near, and the season was changing. I quickly hopped out of bed to the sound of loud banging. Rushing to the stairs leading down from the second floor, I was almost at the second step when I slipped and began to fall.

"Ouch!" and "Darn!" I stubbed my middle toe, twisted my ankle, and tumbled more than halfway down the fifteen steps! I hit my head and broke my fall with my arm. "Ouch, that really hurt!" I thought to myself. I had to regain my composure and balance as the impacts were electric and shocking.

I was so curious about the construction noise that I had ignored my own safety, leading to this hilarious accident. To make it even funnier, I was dressed in bed trousers, a bathrobe I'd left on a hamper next to my bed, and carpet slippers—hardly an outfit for a dramatic fall!

Though I wanted to cry from the pain, I was still in one piece. Determined to figure out the source of the noise, I headed to my neighbor's house to ask if they'd heard what had happened.

"Yes!" they said, concerned. I sheepishly explained that I had fallen down the stairs. Their response? "I know! I heard a loud noise and someone holler 'OUCH'!"

I confessed that it was me, and we ended up laughing together. It was embarrassing, but also a moment to remember. After that, I made sure to be much more careful!

Rudolph's Journey: A Test of Faith and Winter's Promise

By Jonathan Olvera

It was not the best of times in the South Territory.
The winds from the North had not arrived.
The people and critters were restless and unsettled.
Yet, their faith in Saint Nicholas remained strong.

The hot days in the sun had driven away the cold winds.
The reindeer and all their companions were long gone.
The list of the Good and the Bad had not disappeared.
The will of the trees to grow young and bear flowers was strong.

Cocoa and coffee,
Sugar and stories,
Were being crafted.

It takes much for Saint Nicholas to rise from his seat,
But the faith of strong children is enough.
They work hard and behave
All year long.

When Christmas arrives, we all receive gifts—
A cold breeze,
A moment with a snowman,
A hot drink late at night,
A warm morning.

It is enough for all, in one night,
To believe Santa Claus is well,
In the North Pole.

"Oh, goodness, it's hot!"

The climate in the South, beneath the North Pole, was unbearably warm for a reindeer.
This reindeer's name was Rudolph.

"I'm very grateful I have plenty to eat this season," he said.
"But how is a reindeer like me supposed to go fetch Santa Claus?"

The time was changing.
Naturally, Rudolph the Reindeer was busy in the season.

"The pine cones look scarce down here!" he exclaimed.
"I know there are more up North!"

"I believe, and I know! Santa Claus is coming here soon!"

The wind blew, and the sun beamed down.
There were witnesses to Rudolph's faith!

The Sun itself took notice.
"What should we put in the path of Rudolph the Reindeer?" it asked.
"I will play tricks on him! I am the summer heat, and you want me to go away!"

Rudolph could hear the trickery taking place.
It was not uncommon for the tricksters of the Sun to challenge faith in Santa Claus.

"You get out of here, you little devil!" Rudolph declared.
"I've had enough of your games! I know when he's coming, and you are no one to take Christmas from me!"

High in the mountains, where the spirit of the North rested in the skies,
A great wind overheard their quarrel.

"I hear you both!" the wind bellowed.
"I hear you, Rudolph, and I hear you as well, Trickster.
I am the great Wind of the North!"

"Ho! Ho! Ho! The weather has not changed.
This is not a curse, but a test of faith!"

"I will listen to both of you high in the sky.
I promise the weather will change, and the cold will come upon you!"

"Rudolph, from now on, your nose will be red with the promise of winter!"

"And you, Trickster, I promise you this—
To bear witness to the Good and the Bad of boys and girls,
For the great Saint Nicholas."

And so it was done.

Rudolph, the reindeer from the South,
Who was headed North to seek Saint Nicholas,
Had his nose turn red.

The Trickster fell under enchantment,
Bound by the promise of relief from the blistering heat.

The great winter wished to come upon the Americas.

"Rudolph, you are a very faithful reindeer!" the Wind declared.

"Gather more reindeer who believe and have faith,
So that I may set a path for you!"

"Prepare for the season, and Merry Christmas!"

And with that, the North Wind carried the promise of winter forward.

The Life of a Laughing Clown

By Jonathan Olvera

I am a Clown!

I make jokes and I fill balloons with helium!

life is a long journey so I make time to write jokes and wear costumes.

It is good to have an audience.

Sometimes I make people laugh so much It makes me feel like the best at my job!

I wear paint on my face and I have very big shoes!

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" Haughty laughter.

I dont like bad jokes or lies!

I am a professional clown every story I have to tell will make anyone laugh.

I like Red balls, I like Green balls, I also like Yellow balls and Animals.

Greetings and laughter to all my audience.

When I got to work I make everyone laugh! I act silly and I make funny faces and Sounds!

I love my job!

Everyday is a funny story!

Funny Story
by Jonathan Olvera

I have a funny story to tell.
This happened to me in my neighborhood.
I thought I was cool.
I thought I had everything planned out.
I brushed my teeth. I had a big meal.
I went outside. I had things to do.
I need to use the bathroom. There was nowhere to go.
While I was walking it got hotter.
I was looking around! I need somewhere to use the bathroom.
I think to myself.
What is the bathroom?
when I have to use the toilet?
With so much Construction.
Along the path. I find a port-a-john.
I get inside the porta-john. It is terrible.
there's waste inside. I am not the first to use it.
It is hot.
This is my reality.
Then I think to myself. Should I continue?
Should I go home?
I should definitely continue. I need to pay the rent.
How embarrassing I was looking for work.
What is more embarrassing is to look at your shoes.
When there is no toilet paper, think about using a sock.
The good thing is. The whole thing could have been more embarrassing.
I could have had an accident.
That is my funny story to share with everyone.

ZaZa Happening: The Night I Was Taken
By Jonathan Olvera

I was out late at the comedy venue at the university downtown. The weather was nice, and I was enjoying
the crowd and the blend of company.

There was a string of shops adorning the new street project, displaying the latest construction materials.

I enjoyed the comedy show, and afterward, I stopped by a local store to purchase rolling tobacco to smoke
a cigarette.

So much work goes into theater; it really comes alive to me.

"It is a battle," I said to myself.

I was ready to leave the project and hail a taxi when a saucer lit up the road in front of me!

"Hot! Hot! Hot!"

"My head is hot!" I exclaimed as I was covered in a bright light and transported into the saucer.

"Have you seen it?" asked the little green men.

"What?" I asked. "I was just getting cigarettes!"

There was a giant lizard and little green men—grey ones too!

"I just have a couple of questions," said the giant lizard.

"What?" I asked.

"Time has changed," said the lizard.

"Yes, here! Time has changed here, giant lizard!" I exclaimed.

"Am I your God?" asked the grey man.

"It's a story that sounds awfully familiar," I replied. "I was hoping it wouldn't concern me... or any other
green men or grey people!"

"What is going on?" I asked.

"Man was made to serve God," said the green men.

"If you can assist me," said the giant lizard. "I'm just concerned."

"Oh my goodness! You're a giant lizard!"

"Somebody help me!"

"My mother!" I yelled.

"I'm going unconscious," I said.

"It's awful!" And then I went into a coma.

"The radiation! Take the measures!" said the lizard to his men.

"I have questions about this human species. Would they even honor or be civil? I wonder."

"We have a king!"

"Church is for children!"

"The temple is for men!" yelled the green lizard.

I was unconscious while the lizard continued yelling. A grey man took my body into his hands; he was very strong and pressed a button.

"My skin is burning!"

The light returned, and I found myself back on the street, lying among the crowd, all of whom were asleep.

I woke up and fetched some water, placing a wet towel on my head.

"I'm not sure exactly what that means," I murmured.

"I'm going to sit right here."

In the distance, people saw a disk in the sky and began pointing and exclaiming,

"Oh my goodness!"

"Did you see that?" they said.

"I did!" I exclaimed.

"It's all geometric!"

"It's turning around!" they shouted.

It turned on blue lights and took off at light speed!

I will never forget that night—a giant lizard stole my taxi and scared me very much!

It's not every day you see a spaceship. And today...

"It is ZaZa happening... right here, here, here!"

Until the next visit.

A Grandmother's Strength: A Journey of Love and Healing

By Jonathan Olvera

My Grandma was a good person who had lived through many years of social change.

It was always a challenge in our community to address illness and provide people with the medical treatment and nourishment needed to heal both the body and the soul.

As I grew older, the lessons my Grandma taught me became more and more relevant.
They were strong moral lessons—on being truthful, strong, and honest.

I tried my best to be that person, even though I knew that not everything in life was perfect.

As a young man, I began to experience a nightmare when I discovered unusual marks on the concrete floor that covered the topsoil and gave value to our property.

At the same time, during the dry season, my Grandma's illness worsened.
The dry air was harsh on her health, and she was diagnosed with cancer in her left lung.

Despite her illness, she always did her best—medicating herself, sharing literature, and teaching the young people she mentored.

We played board games, attended school, and researched everything we could about the illness that had taken over our home.

Eventually, we decided that surgery was the best option to remove the infection, and we hoped for the best—that my Grandma would recover.

It was an intense time.

I gathered my things after every healthy meal my Grandma prepared, and we prayed together.
I read books and made time to call different doctors, searching for answers.

Then, finally, I got lucky!

A doctor in town was interested in practicing a new procedure that could save my Grandma's life.
It was called chemotherapy.

She was treated with an injection, and now, she lives happily at home—much healthier than before.

I am forever grateful to everyone who helped me and my Grandmother.

Grandmother's Recipes: A Taste of Love and Memories

By Jonathan Olvera

Grandmother always had a fantastic recipe to brighten the mood, even in the most difficult times.

It was always a splendid dish to enjoy, no matter the season.

I've always been fond of the kitchen—searching through spices and vegetables,

Looking for the perfect blend of flavors to create something new.

But Grandmother always had the recipe.

I respected this.

Food was hard to come by,

Yet there was always milk, water, grain, salt, and even meat.

It takes great skill to craft a dish—

To make food taste delicious while nourishing the body with a hearty and healthy blend of ingredients.

I am always taken back by the smell of hot stones warming up in the morning and afternoon.

The sweet aromas of sugars and purées in my grandmother's home

Are a fond reel of memories.

The best food always comes from Grandma.

I love my Grandma and her recipes.

One day, I will learn to make gentle, comforting food—just like my elders do.

Santa's Promise: A Winter of Blessings

By Jonathan Olvera

Ho ho ho!"

It was heard somewhere around the North Pole.

Santa Claus was stirring.

The reindeer had been called to awaken.

There were very many things to do and take care of before the day of blessings.

Workers who had faith in this man and Saint Nicholas.

They were excited and exchanged many phrases.

"We have got to prepare the Bells!" They said,

"It must smell perfect to please the faithful."

They were anxious to prepare the seed of the trees to Adorn our Christmas scene.

Talks of beverages cold and hot.

"There are many things to complete before Santa Claus can take his flight!"

"In our work I find this possible!"

"Hooray!" All the workers shouted.

It is very exciting.

The time was Nearing, when Santa Claus would call upon the great winds and ask for the sake of the families in need to bring along and cold Christmas all good men were promised.

"Come now winds from the south!" Santa Claus said.

"Come now winds from the north and the east as well."

"Come now wind from the West!"

"I have much good faith in the work being done."

"I test very much the faith of our young."

"Pass me now the list of the faithful and obedient."

"I Will Bless these homes!"

All of this could be said. Man trusted Santa Claus. If something were to be done and it was done in good faith. There was no doubt in our hearts that Santa Claus would come. The trees would grow and Bloom.

The flowers would be collected and cut according to the word of Our Lord in our time.

Workers will get up and shave stones to make Mary bells and jingle.

The dogs would bark and cheer on.

The time I come for good faith and patience to overcome.

"Be merry be merry!" "Do not be short in your faith!" Santa Claus will come.

Weather was hot and the sun was high in the sky. The months had passed. It was now time for the darkness to bring in cold weather from the north.

"Come now North Wind!" "Let us move to the South to bring good weather!" It was done.

This was a big task for Santa Claus. To rely on the faith of men and women.

This chill was felt everywhere and everyone knew what Santa Claus could do.

The people were eager. To see this great man.

The bakeries made cookies.

The chocolatiers made hot drinks.

The nuns made eggnog.

And good pupils made decorations.
Santa Claus is coming and he's bringing snow.
Prepare yourself and be good! There's much work to do!

The End.

Good Night, My Child: A Journey into Dreams

By Jonathan Olvera

The moon rises in the ocean of darkness.

It is nighttime.

It is time to rest.

To put away the thoughts
That keeps young boys and girls awake during the day.

We have brushed our teeth.

We have eaten our grain.

Now, we await the days ahead after a good night's sleep.

Oh, how exciting the dreams will be!

Guardians and knights,

Clouds and dragons—

So many adventures await us in our sleep.

We have played and laughed,

Shouted and run,

Our clothes now soiled from the day's fun.

But now, we are exhausted.

In the morning, the sun will rise.

Its rays of sunshine will greet us.

The sky will say,

"Good morning, my children."

But for now, it is time to sleep.

Farewell in your dreams.

Good night, my child.

"The Spark of Discovery: A Student of Benjamin Franklin and The School of Electricity"

As written by Jonathan Aloe Vera Olvera, a Student of Benjamin Franklin and The School of Electricity

Zap!
Crackle!
Zap, crackle, zap!

Late at night, I was awake, restless with hundreds of ideas filling my brain. The memories of my journal and my progressive attitude toward my studies filled me with excitement. Every idea, every note I jotted down, seemed to ignite something in me, like sparks from the very electricity I hoped to master.

"I need to find the dimensions of this proton," I murmured aloud, as my thoughts spiraled deeper into the realms of physics, the building blocks of everything I had come to understand.

I was always talking to myself. It was a habit, one I couldn't shake, but it had become an essential part of my thought process. I needed to speak my thoughts to fully grasp them, to make sense of the chaos in my mind.

"I have a dream," I continued, "I know I will succeed."

Each day, as the sun rose, I faced a new challenge. The day was a direct challenge to the limits of my understanding, to the confines of my own thoughts. The sun's daily rise felt like a push against my inner walls, urging me to grow, to go beyond what I knew, to stretch further than before.

How frustrating!
Success is not impossible.

The frustration was real. My mind often raced ahead of me, chasing ideas faster than I could grasp them. The relentless drive for progress sometimes felt like a weight—one that I carried with determination, but it wasn't easy. The path I had chosen was filled with obstacles, both internal and external, and I had to wrestle with my own doubts.

But anger, though powerful, could be a double-edged sword. It was a motivating force, yes, but it could also cloud my judgment if I let it take control. So, I worked hard to focus, to channel that energy into something productive. It was all part of the process, part of my journey toward mastering electricity.

I was grasping the basic idea of resource collection, making it work for me. How far I had come from being idle was a testament to my efforts. In the beginning, I had been aimless, unsure of how to take the first step. But now, I saw a path, a series of steps I could take to move forward. It wasn't a straight road, but it was a road nonetheless, and I was walking it with purpose.

My brain was whirring constantly. It was always on, buzzing with ideas, with thoughts of what to try next. Sometimes, it felt like I couldn't quiet it down. Sometimes, I wasn't sure if this restlessness was caused by exposure to so many new concepts or if it was simply my mind's relentless push to continue the work I had been taught to finish.

There was no end to the questions. No end to the curiosity. Every answer I found seemed to lead to more questions, and I knew I had to keep going. The pursuit of knowledge, of discovery, was a path I couldn't abandon.

Food was something I had always taken for granted. But now, it had become part of the equation. Fuel. It was as simple as that. Food wasn't just about sustenance anymore; it was about providing the energy I needed to continue. I couldn't afford to waste time on distractions. Every moment was precious, and I knew I needed to make the most of each one.

"Progress always needs a good friend," I reminded myself, as I scribbled the words into my journal. I had read somewhere that it was important to find a good mentor, a guide who could lead you through the struggles of discovery. But for me, at this point, it was more about inner reflection. I was learning to rely on myself.

The process of quarrying metal, forging it, and preparing it for use to deliver electricity had become my obsession. It wasn't just about gathering resources anymore. It was about understanding the materials, about connecting them to the world of electricity in a way that made sense. The metal itself, cold and unyielding, had become a kind of puzzle I was determined to solve. Each piece I collected, each scrap I turned into something usable, was a small victory—a step closer to my ultimate goal.

The great open sky above me was a constant reminder of the possibilities. It stretched endlessly, a vast canvas waiting for me to paint my mark on it. The sky wasn't just a physical space; it was a symbol of the challenges ahead. Every time I looked up, I thought about the boundless potential of electricity and how, one day, I might be able to harness it, to control it.

The idea of erecting a post to serve as the foundation for my experiments was a challenge, one I welcomed. I knew it wouldn't be easy. But then again, nothing worth doing ever was.

Challenge the sky, challenge electricity itself, I thought to myself. I had to push against the limitations of both the physical world and my own understanding. I had to break through the barriers that had been set for me. Electricity was mysterious, elusive, but I was determined to unravel its secrets. I would be the one to master it.

Soon, I will master the dimensions of electricity and wield them in my hand! I imagined the power coursing through me, not as a mere observer, but as someone who could shape it, direct it, control it. This was my dream, my calling. The idea thrilled me, and I felt the spark of possibility growing stronger within me with every passing moment.

I spent a lot of time thinking about it, making plans, keeping notes. My journal was filled with scribbled equations, diagrams, and half-formed ideas. None of them were as perfect as the work I had seen from my teacher, Benjamin Franklin. His experiments, his discoveries, were awe-inspiring. They showed me what was possible. But they also reminded me of how far I had to go.

I had so much to learn. I wasn't there yet, but I could see the path before me. It was winding, filled with challenges, but it was a path I was determined to follow. The discoveries I had made so far were small, yet

significant. Each new understanding was a building block, a piece of the larger puzzle that I was trying to solve.

"I will continue my efforts, and I will succeed," I wrote in my journal, reaffirming my resolve. I was driven by an unyielding belief in myself and my mission. There would be setbacks, there would be failures, but I would not stop. I would not give up. This was just the beginning, and I was ready to face whatever came next.

I didn't know exactly when I would unlock the mysteries of electricity, or when my experiments would bear fruit. But I knew that as long as I kept pushing forward, kept questioning, kept learning, I would one day wield the power I sought. And when that day came, I would be ready. For now, all I could do was keep working, keep dreaming, and never stop moving forward.

A New State

By Jonathan Olvera

It was a grand scene, a vivid panorama of colors painting the horizon, another morning in the new state. The sky was a muted orange, transitioning into a blinding blue, and the land stretched out before me—barren yet full of potential. The roads, though rough and arid, carried the legacy of ancient civilizations. The early light spilled over the cracked earth and sparse vegetation, casting long shadows across the horizon.

"Coffee in the morning is how I wake up," I said aloud to myself, my voice cutting through the silence of the desert.

"How quick," came the reply from within me.

"Satisfying for me," I muttered, taking a sip from the mug in my hand, feeling the warmth seep into my tired bones.

The day ahead was yet another reminder of the struggles that defined this place. It was not unfamiliar—racism and inequality still seeped into the bones of this new state, despite the promises of change. The lack of mechanical devices, the scarcity of resources, the jagged divides between the people; they all contributed to the same old song of division. The inequalities were so deeply rooted, it was as if they had become the foundation on which everything was built.

I sighed, feeling the weight of it all. But I could not stop. I had to push forward.

"It is an excellent choice to make your company," I said aloud to myself, repeating the speech I would give to my new partner, the promise I had just made in contract. The messenger had already been sent to negotiate the terms. It was all carefully planned, all part of the intricate game I had learned to play. Notes, papers, language, and political campaigning—these were the tools of my trade. My family had always been in this business. It was second nature to me now.

I paced back and forth as I rehearsed the words, imagining the conversation ahead. I had long grown accustomed to the shifting tides of power, but I could not ignore the sense of unease in the pit of my stomach. It was a tightrope walk, balancing ambition and morality. And sometimes, it felt like I was standing at the edge of a cliff, waiting for the wind to push me into the unknown.

"It reeks like bears and coyotes!" I said aloud to myself, practicing how to deter predators. There was something about the land here, something wild, untamed. It wasn't just the wildlife; it was the people too. There were factions everywhere, struggling for control, clawing for dominance in a landscape that didn't seem to care either way.

The roads of the Roman Empire had led me to the Southwest desert, and I was becoming accustomed to it, despite the overwhelming heat and dust. The air felt thick, as if each breath was a battle. Yet, despite the discomfort, I couldn't help but feel a strange connection to this place. It was as though the land itself was speaking to me, urging me to stay, to make my mark.

"I have an itch," whispered my conscience, the quiet voice that always accompanied me, questioning my every move.

"Gathering stone," I replied absentmindedly, letting the words drift into the air. "It's all about the foundation."

"Yes, I am grateful. My heart does beat." The conscience was always there, ever-present, and sometimes, it was the only voice of reason.

"Let every day be the same," I muttered, staring out into the distance. The landscape was a mirror to my thoughts: vast, barren, yet full of possibility.

It was becoming common for me to talk to myself. The general population here, they weren't happy. They weren't accepting of the governance, of the leadership that I and others had helped put in place. There was dissatisfaction in the air—an undercurrent of unrest. And yet, despite the turmoil, I couldn't give up. I couldn't walk away.

"It's disappointing," I said, shaking my head as I reflected on the state of things. "But I hate to tell you, I must continue."

I looked around at the people, the workers, the traders, the families—so many lives intertwined in a system that seemed to care little for their individual struggles. "Although many would like to think otherwise," I said to myself, my voice tinged with bitterness, "I will prepare for the road ahead."

The road ahead was unclear, but I would not falter. Giving up was never an option for me. It was a silly idea, one that didn't belong in my world. The challenges here were big, yes, but I had come here for a reason. I had a purpose that could not be ignored. I was part of something larger, something that would take time to build and even longer to change.

Young and full of ideas, I saw social programming as the next path to personal contracting. It wasn't just about money or power—it was about restructuring, about offering something to those who had been left behind. The idea was new, yes, but it was a seed I was ready to plant. There was much work to do, and though the odds seemed overwhelming, I was determined to see it through.

"Can I do it again?" I whispered to myself, staring out at the endless desert. "Go against the riots and the corruption? Fight for something good in a place where everything feels wrong?"

It was a challenge, yes, but one I was ready to complete. I had faced challenges before. I had fought against the currents of time and tradition. But now, it wasn't just about winning. It was about changing the system, about finding ways to bring people together, about offering a new path forward—one where everyone had a chance, regardless of their background.

The contract that I would soon present was more than a business deal; it was a promise. A promise to those who had given up hope, to those who had never been given a chance to succeed. It was a promise that one day, the inequalities here would be addressed—not by force, not by power, but through understanding, through dialogue, and through true leadership.

I took another sip of my coffee, watching the sun climb higher in the sky. The day was heating up, and the work ahead would be difficult, but I knew I was ready. I had always been ready for a challenge. And this one, this one would be different. Because this time, I was fighting not just for me, but for everyone.

I turned to face the horizon, the vast desert stretching out before me, knowing that it would take time. But change would come. And I would be at the forefront, shaping the future of this new state, one step at a time.

Coins on the Cobblestones

By Jonathan Olvera

“I need a bottle of liquor,” said the blonde man, his voice calm but firm. His blue eyes scanned the street ahead as though searching for something more than the bottle he had requested.

It was early summer on a European project—the kind that drew expats and dreamers from all walks of life. The cobbled streets of this small United Kingdom town seemed bathed in a soft golden light, and the air smelled faintly of fresh rain and blooming flowers. Somewhere in the distance, a church bell tolled, its low chime marking the late afternoon hour.

“I drink the liquid,” a rough voice interrupted. The blonde man turned slightly and noticed a beggar seated on the corner of the bricked path. The man’s clothes were tattered, his face weathered by years of hardship, and his fingers nervously fidgeted with the fraying edge of his coat.

The blonde man raised an eyebrow. “Did I give you money?” he asked, his tone neither harsh nor particularly kind—just curious.

“No,” said the beggar, shaking his head.

“Do you need more money?”

The beggar hesitated for a moment, as though weighing his answer carefully. Then, with a shrug, he said, “I like cigarettes.”

The blonde man’s lips curved into a faint smile. “And I like wine,” he replied.

The beggar’s eyes lit up slightly. “I like the smell of cigarettes,” he added. “It makes me feel better.”

“I see,” said the blonde man, nodding thoughtfully. The street was quiet, save for the distant sound of children playing and the occasional rumble of a passing car.

“I could use a couple of pounds,” the beggar said after a pause, his voice low but hopeful.

Without a word, the blonde man reached into the pocket of his neatly tailored coat and pulled out five coins, each valued at one pound. He bent down slightly and placed them carefully on the ground in front of the beggar.

“Well, that’s what I like to do,” he said with a small shrug. “You can call me Wayne.”

The beggar’s eyes widened in surprise. “Yes, yes!” he exclaimed, his voice trembling with gratitude. “Oh my goodness!”

Wayne chuckled softly. “Good day to you, and everlasting joy,” he said, tipping an imaginary hat before turning and walking away.

As he strolled down the bricked path, his thoughts began to drift. *The shortcomings of humanity—the pain of hunger*, he mused, his mind turning over the brief encounter he'd just had. There was something humbling about the simplicity of the exchange. *The nature of an adult is fascinating*, he thought.

He glanced around, taking in the sights and sounds of the small town. The soft pastel colors of the buildings, the hanging flower baskets swaying gently in the breeze, the quiet buzz of conversation from a nearby café—it all felt oddly surreal, as though he were walking through a painting.

How quickly things can change, he reflected. Just a moment ago, he had been a man searching for liquor, and now he was thinking about the fragility of human existence. Life was strange that way—full of unexpected moments that could shift your perspective in an instant.

As he walked, Wayne's mind wandered back to his own past. He had not always been the well-dressed, confident man he appeared to be today. There had been times when he, too, had struggled—when he had been lost, hungry, and unsure of where his next meal would come from. He remembered sleeping on park benches, counting the coins in his pocket, and wondering how he had ended up there.

Those days felt distant now, but they had left an indelible mark on him. Perhaps that was why he had stopped to talk to the beggar. He knew what it felt like to be invisible, to have people walk past you without so much as a glance.

Wayne sighed and ran a hand through his blonde hair. The sun was beginning to dip lower in the sky, casting long shadows across the street. He decided to stop at a small café for a drink. The place was cozy, with mismatched chairs and a chalkboard menu listing the day's specials. He ordered a glass of red wine and took a seat by the window.

As he sipped his drink, he watched the world go by. A young couple strolled hand in hand, laughing at some private joke. An elderly woman walked her tiny dog, pausing every few steps to let it sniff at the flowers. A group of children chased each other around a lamppost, their laughter ringing out like music.

It was a grand scene, Wayne thought—a reminder of the beauty and complexity of life. And in that moment, he felt a deep sense of gratitude. He was grateful for the wine in his glass, for the warmth of the café, and for the simple fact that he was alive.

He thought again about the beggar. What would the man do with the money he had given him? Would he buy cigarettes, as he had said? Or perhaps a meal, or a warm drink? Wayne would never know, and that was okay. It wasn't about controlling what happened next; it was about the act of giving itself.

As he finished his wine and prepared to leave, Wayne felt lighter somehow, as though a weight had been lifted from his shoulders. He stepped back out onto the street, the evening air cool against his skin.

His day had been absolutely fantastic, he realized. And for a brief, humbling moment, he imagined a different life. *I could be a beggar*, he thought. *I could be sitting on that corner, waiting for a stranger to drop a coin at my feet.*

But today, he wasn't. Today, he was Wayne—the blonde stranger who had given a beggar five pounds and walked away with a little more hope in his heart.

The Thirteen Stars and the Miracle of Fire
by Jonathan Olvera

It was a hot and red sky under thirteen shiny stars, burning with hope and promise, when a child was born.

The air, thick with the acrid scent of salt and spice, carried a heat so fierce it seemed to burn the very bones. The bazaar—a cacophony of bartering voices, the clink of metal, and the flutter of merchants' wares—was barely audible over the distant crash of the waves. Yet, beneath all this, the baby's first cry rang clear, a sound more powerful than any symphony played by nature itself. It was not unusual for a baby to be born unto a humble family, surrounded by the lively stirrings of everyday life. But this birth was different. This birth was a scene to remember off the fiery coast of Sidon, where destiny was woven not in the fabric of men, but in the very elements that shaped the world.

A mound of moss and cobalt spewed an urn of ash and sod into the ocean, becoming alive with liquid fire that splashed against the waters, tugging at my skin, its heat pulling at my very essence. The salty liquid turned to steam, rising in a misty veil that obscured the heavens. The ground beneath my feet vibrated with the rumble of ancient forces stirring, forces I had long sought to control, to bend to my will.

I covered my face, shielding my eyes from the stinging mist.

"The Lamp," I whispered to myself, my fingers tightening around the warm brass. The lamp had been my burden, my salvation, and my curse. It held secrets beyond the understanding of men, power beyond reckoning. It had granted me riches, wisdom, and dominion over the forces of nature, yet even power must be tempered with humility. My time with the genie had come to an end. I had taken much. Now, I had to give.

"I must get it to the child."

The waves crashed against the shore as I made my way to the humble dwelling where the newborn lay swaddled in cloth. His cries echoed faintly, softer than those of other children, as though he had already sensed the weight of the world resting on his tiny shoulders. He was no prince, no heir to a great throne, yet destiny had marked him in ways the world could not yet see.

I knelt beside him, the lamp held close to my chest. The genie inside was exhausted from my demands. His power had faded over time, but he still lingered—waiting for a new keeper. It was time to repay him, to grant him a new purpose.

I took a deep breath, steadying myself. "It's time," I whispered.

I rubbed the lamp three times, just as I had done countless times before, and the air crackled with unseen energy. From the swirling mist that rose from the sea, he emerged—a being of light and shadow, formed from the very elements that shaped the world. The steam and salt from the coast coalesced around him as he took form. His presence felt like both a comfort and a threat, a reminder of everything I had gained and everything I had lost.

"Esquire? What is it?" The genie's voice was both gentle and commanding, yet beneath it, I sensed a deep weariness.

"It is time I hand you off to a child," I said, my voice steady but filled with emotion. The weight of this moment pressed down on me, as if the universe itself was holding its breath.

The genie tilted his head, his ethereal eyes narrowing, and for a brief moment, I saw a flicker of something ancient in them—something that had seen centuries of masters come and go. "A child? You would bind me to an infant?"

"Not bind," I corrected, my voice firm with conviction. "Entrust."

The genie folded his arms, considering my words. His form shimmered in the moonlight. "And what will the wishes be?"

I looked down at the baby, his tiny fingers curled into fists, his breathing steady and pure. The weight of the moment pressed upon me. This was not merely the passing of an object but the transferring of fate itself. I had to choose my words wisely.

"I wish to control the moon and the tides of the sun," I began, my voice resonant with the power of my request. "That he may understand the balance of light and darkness, of rise and fall."

The genie nodded slowly, his expression unreadable. "And the second wish?"

"I wish upon Zeus the strengths of all burdens." My heart pounded in my chest as I spoke the words. "That he may endure hardship, yet never be broken. That he may carry the weight of the world with honor."

The genie studied me, his form shimmering like a mirage, caught between the realms of the earth and sky. "And your final wish?"

I exhaled, a long, steady breath that seemed to carry the weight of years. I looked once more at the child, this fragile yet mighty soul destined for greatness. "I wish to collect the wages of my nature until the end of time. That my essence, my lessons, my wisdom, be carried within him. That my spirit may guide him, even when I am gone."

The genie smiled—a rare, knowing smile. "These are humble wishes indeed."

I placed the lamp beside the child, my hands trembling slightly. "He will be your new keeper."

The genie nodded, bowing slightly, an act of acknowledgment and reverence. "Then it shall be."

A golden light wrapped around the infant, an ethereal glow that softened the edges of the night, and the genie receded into the lamp. The air settled, the sea calmed, and the sky shimmered with a strange, otherworldly light. The child did not stir, yet something in the universe had shifted. The weight of time itself seemed to bend around him, and for a moment, I feared that the balance of the world had been irrevocably altered.

I stood, feeling the weight of my years, knowing that my journey had reached its end. The future now belonged to him.

"Farewell, Genie," I whispered, a tear slipping from my eye. "And return to me soon."

For though my story had ended, his had only just begun.

As the years passed, the child grew into a man unlike any other. He was neither ruler nor warrior, yet his presence commanded the respect of all who crossed his path. The wisdom of the tides, the strength of burdens, and the essence of a soul long departed were all within him. Yet, he never sought glory or adoration. His path was one of quiet grace.

I watched him from afar, not as a father, not even as a mentor, but as someone who had once held the power to shape the world and now had no need to do so. The lamp remained with him, a silent guardian, its power awakening only when destiny deemed it so.

Miracles followed in his wake, though few recognized them for what they were. Crops flourished in barren lands, the sick found healing in his presence, and even the stars seemed to align in his favor. But the greatest miracle was not of magic or power—it was the heart within him, the heart of a man who bore the wisdom of the ages yet walked humbly among his people.

He did not seek to rule. Instead, he chose to calm the storms of men's hearts. He healed not through grand displays of power, but through quiet acts of kindness. Those who met him said little, but when they spoke of him, their voices trembled with reverence. Some called him a prophet. Others, a sorcerer. But those who knew the truth simply called him what he had always been—a keeper.

And so, the story of the lamp and the genie lived on, not as a tale of greed or ambition, but as a testament to the greatest miracle of all: the ability to choose wisdom over power, compassion over conquest, and love over legacy.

There were those who whispered of the lamp's power, of its long journey from master to master, each one more desperate than the last, each one seeking something the world could never offer. Yet the true keeper was the one who understood that power was not meant to be seized, but carried. And in the quiet moments when the winds blew just so, the lamp would stir, waiting for the next keeper, the next moment when the stars would align once more.

Perhaps, one day, when the stars align again, the lamp will find another keeper, and the story will begin again.

Xeiph Custin: Last of the Void

By Jonathan Olvera

The moisture across my cool grey skin felt odd. I was used to this precipitate in my time on the Earth.

My life was complicated.

Xeiph was my terrestrial name. Custin was my underwater name.

Within the Milky Way, it was strange to be a cold-blooded and underwater being. Sometimes, I did not know what to make of it or what to think.

'I am here,' I thought to myself.

The atmosphere in the Milky Way was different. I knew it by the way I came to understand English and the need for water.

Existence here was complicated, and the riddle lay in building a way out of the Solar System.

Reflections were a silly idea. Everything was so definite—more than just this terrestrial existence.

'Xeiph Custin,' I thought to myself. 'Alien to Earth.'

It was difficult to remember how I ended up in the cabin of a chrome capsule, suspended by hyper magnets and precious diamonds. The underbelly of the craft had expended itself, and it seemed as though the suspension of my home planet had wiped away memories, leaving them void within the Milky Way.

I turned on the magnet and pulled in towards the core of the Earth. Clouds turned, and winds swirled. The darkness of the Earth consumed the rays of the sun and gave passage to giant, steamy, black rain clouds.

The rain fell, giving hope to Xeiph Custin—hope that Earth was livable.

But hope was not enough.

I needed to know if survival was truly possible. I stepped out of my capsule, my webbed feet sinking slightly into the damp soil. The coolness of the ground sent a pulse through my limbs, a reminder of the oceans I had once ruled. I had spent years adapting, adjusting to the atmospheric changes, but could I ever belong?

A distant rumble echoed through the sky. The rain intensified, cascading in thick sheets. I tilted my head upward, allowing the water to cleanse the lingering uncertainty clinging to my being. My gills flared, absorbing the moisture, and for the first time in what felt like eternity, I breathed fully.

Perhaps I had been running from the truth. My planet was gone, wiped from existence. The diamonds and hyper magnets that had carried me through the cosmos were remnants of a civilization that no longer existed. There was no returning home. Earth was all that remained.

I reached forward, pressing my hand against the trunk of a towering tree. The bark was rough, warm—a stark contrast to the metallic walls of my capsule. It was real, alive, and breathing just as I was. My fingers traced the grooves, feeling the pulse of the planet beneath my touch.

Maybe I wasn't just an alien to Earth. Maybe Earth had been waiting for me.

A deep exhale left my lips as I turned back to my capsule. I had spent too much time looking to the stars for answers when they had been beneath my feet all along.

Xeiph Custin, last of my kind, survivor of the void. No longer seeking a way out.

But rather, a way to begin again.

I ventured forward, my webbed feet pressing into the damp earth, carrying me deeper into this alien world that was now my home. The air was thick with moisture, carrying the scent of wet soil and life itself. Strange creatures, small and fragile, scurried in the undergrowth, their beady eyes reflecting the dim light that pierced through the canopy above.

I crouched beside a pool of water, gazing at my own reflection. The ripple of the surface distorted my features, but the eyes remained the same—deep, endless, searching. I reached in, feeling the liquid wrap around my fingers, familiar yet foreign.

A rustling sound snapped my focus away from the water. Something—or someone—was nearby. I remained motionless, listening. The footsteps were hesitant, cautious. Slowly, I turned my head.

A human.

It was a young one, no more than an adolescent, with wide eyes filled with curiosity and fear. They clutched a crude weapon—a broken branch—as if it could protect them from whatever they believed me to be.

We stared at one another, frozen in the moment. Two beings from different worlds, yet here we stood, breathing the same air, sharing the same ground.

I raised a hand slowly, palm open, a universal sign of peace. The child hesitated but did not flee. They lowered their weapon slightly, their small frame trembling in the cold rain.

Perhaps Earth had not just been waiting for me.

Perhaps it had been waiting for us—to understand one another.

A new beginning, not just for me, but for both our kinds.

Joseph Stalin

By Ashur Namik

Nationalism in Moscow was on the rise. The socialist victories of the Great War and the rapid advancements of a platform community were the trademarks of the decade.

I experienced my share of confusion interpreting this transition of authority. Leadership is the valiant effort of the sons of our mother, and progress within was defined through hard work.

Definitely, the boots and trousers worn by the community groups and authorities around the borders of North America and Mainland East America symbolized this transformation.

"It is a battle," I breathed to myself.

I was accustomed to paying close attention to the scenery and always retaining as much detail as possible about what was happening around me and my home.

The objective was to meet the requirements to join the mining expedition and be able to look under the trees in the forests of Moscow and scream, "Gold! I found gold!"

It was a sweet reel and a memory that I have always retained for my heart's good health.

"What is there to do today?" I thought to myself. "Any new tasks?"

I grasped the footing rest at the bottom of my feet into the cushion in my boots, which I had afforded with a bout of good luck while looking for a job at the grocer's.

I stepped onto the balm off the porch, where I had just come to full consciousness after the discussion at home about job hunting and achieving success.

The billboard of the Reichstag was up. It displayed precise instructions:

Surveillance State - Arizona Territory and Moscow, Russia

The population of Arizona has access to a calculator and a marker/computer. To mark work hours, where a human would be hunting animals, a person would be making a killing. The point system is stored on a device with the specific signature of the U.S. Government to Administration, designed to fit the given form and spreadsheet. All work is done individually and double-checked using human verification. Nothing is completely electronic or automated.

KGB

Community Bureau Groups:

- Labor and Trade Office – Closed
 - New Neighborhood Services – Migration Internationale
-

The territory had been invaded by North American troops and their rapid advances in mining and pan-resource labor expeditions.

It was tense. The 'Whites' were under the leadership of Lenin and several Assyrian men. The Colors were to look at Joseph Stalin as their leader.

Russia had been invaded, but it wasn't too bad for the population.

"God bless," I thought to myself, with every intention of bringing justice with my soul to Moscow, Russia.

"Am I your leader?" I would think to myself.

"Could I be the leader of this colony?"

The location had:

- Quarters
- Kitchen
- Dining hall
- Smelter
- Quarry
- Well
- Labor office
- Tree nursery
- Fruit garden
- Fire pit
- Church
- Grocery store
- Pay/Coin center

In my personal thoughts and inventory, I was conducting the carriage and horse kick when a sound came from the church halls. It was choir practice, and they were singing in unison a new song.

I knew this song from church; it was called *A Season of Praise*.

They were singing:

"Oh, give praise!
The season has changed!
The day has dimmed!
To the darkness in the sky!
The light of our Faith!
A guidance on our paths to the Lord!
Oh, the labor! Oh, good work!
I will walk, I will pray!
Oh, how blessed is the house of my Lord!
For my faith to give way to the fruit!
I have faith!
I will live!
The work of my church!
And the prophet it has sent!

Grow, grow!
My good faith, it will grow!
God in heaven!
He has blessed all our homes!
All make way! All make way!
Christ shines its light from above!
It is here! It is here!
A blessing and a gift from above!
My feet have been washed in the vineyard of the Lord.
I give praise! I give praise!
Behold the work!
Of the angels!
It brings peace to my heart!
To know the season has changed!
I will rest in peace knowing our work will be done!"

It was nice to hear the songs of the congregation.

Across the street was the labor office, and I was hailed as a free person, able to attend a personal session and interview.

The base of the building was sturdy, and the wooden roof had a nice shape that enveloped the exterior with minimal adhesive or concrete. The chairs inside were all wooden, and the interview was not color-oriented—it was rather intense.

The questions were simple, although they carried another meaning. A serious tone was used, and I felt there was a threat—an Assyrian threat.

"Do you understand the task of our office?" asked the Austrian man behind a wooden desk with enough papers, ink, and pens to work efficiently in the Office of Labor.

"Yes," I responded.

"Are you present, intelligent, and one person?"

"Yes, sir. I am intelligent, and I am one person."

"Do you understand the Human One in nudity?" asked the Austrian man.

"That is a complicated question. I have not yet had a difficult time understanding the human body," I said.

"Do you have any behavioral issues?"

"No, sir."

"Do you understand our base of income?"

"I understand the work of the quarry."

"Will you labor?" he asked.

"I can labor to the best of my ability," I responded.

"How can you function?"

"Coffee and tobacco," I answered.

"Good," he said.

"You may leave now. I will call you or summon you if there is work available."

"Good! Thank you, sir."

I left the office.

I went to the door, turned the brass knob, and opened it. The air brushed against my face, my eyelashes—that was it. I looked down at the concrete, balmed and fresh.

I was excited to be part of the labor party. The politics were exhausting. The work in the quarry was a tax that had to be paid to ensure the longevity of our state in Russia.

It had been a long time since the famine in Russia. The House of Commons in the United Kingdom and the American labor party had much work to do on the mainland.

It was difficult to define the suffering—the famine, the pestilence. It had been present for a very long time. If I had to describe it, I would call it a putrid, degenerate plague.

The common man had no way to ensure he would survive—a demon monster with the ability to destroy all life in the old world. It had taken years, long years, decades, centuries of hard work to achieve a measure of certainty in the health and survival of the Russian Empire.

It seemed to have been under a curse—an ancient Egyptian magic dating back to the construction of the Great Pyramid and the demise of the great Oasis of the Nile River.

Things now had to be more sanitary when building homes. The common man had to wash his hands more often, disconnecting from the very fabric of Mother Nature.

"What an unholy circumcision," I muttered to myself.
"Is there any other way to overcome this situation?" I asked aloud.

"It's going to take more than being a doctor," I continued.
"It's going to take fire! Chemicals!"

I quieted down, not wanting to be too loud. The Whites and the Colors were still separated under the leadership of Lenin and Joseph Stalin. Although I was allowed to speak freely, Joseph Stalin was like a father to me.

I blinked and looked toward the impound platform, then turned to the backside of the billboard I had been reading. I steadied my footing, pressing into the cushion of my boots—boots I had afforded with some luck.

The text on the billboard read, in American for clarity, as Russian orders:

The New Bill To Be Passed in the State of America in Mainland Russia

A person in the United States—American Russia would be admitted into function to use institutional resources in the livestock slaughter. The research of tissue, organs, and new measures would ensure the formula behind the new 'product.'

The placement of the product must fit the definition of **Church, Altar, Sacrifice**—regional. This action would require the 'product' to be accepted as an item, measured, and issued a note to circulate within our septic system if necessary, in order to lessen criminal 'enterprise.'

State and Federal Benefits:

- Healthcare
- Capital
- Beginning and End

To mark the admission and departure of **visitors into the United States and American Russia** for this benefit. **Organic.**

The second part would cover the **previous idea of income collection** in the **State of the United States and Russia**. A person in the United States and Russia...

It was a political bulletin. It caught my attention, and I felt the weight of depression sink into me—being a citizen of this new United States and American State in Russia.

As I stood there, absorbing the weight of the bulletin's words, I felt a deep unease settle over me. The world was shifting beneath my feet, the tectonic plates of history grinding together, reshaping the land I once thought I understood. This new United States and American Russia—what did it mean for people like me? What did it mean for the laborers, the workers in the quarry, the men and women who toiled day and night under the watchful eyes of leaders we barely knew?

Collateral Regret

By Kaveh Shirazi

"I apologize." In my own words, I pronounced the shame that had festered in my heart and now spilled into the ears of my daughter.

"A monster!" I gasped, my breath becoming shallow and frantic. *How could I?*

I am such an idiot!

I had spent weeks binging on coffee, indulging in marijuana and chocolates, drowning it all out.

"I fucking drowned it all out!"

"God, I'm fucking ruined!" I yelled.

"What is the matter with you, Dad? Are you okay?" she asked, concern laced in her voice.

Well, I thought to myself.

I had been offered \$32,000 to launch a barrage of projectiles into Iran. I thought it was a joke.

Now, I am one of the most wanted people in the world.

I was cold and frightened.

The signature of a good surgeon, I mused quietly.

"Nothing, my love," I replied to my daughter.

Yet, fear gnawed at me. My livelihood was destroyed, lost to the sick imagery of war and the cold, soulless abyss of a city jail.

"What an idiot!" I scolded myself.

For years, I had stared at that advertisement, always assuming it was a joke.

Well, I'm going to click it! I had thought.

I'm going to kill innocent people today.

And I did.

Twenty-four hours after the transaction, I went to Starbucks for a caramel coffee. Then, the most disturbing sound filled my ears—

The drowning roar of missiles launching.

"BOOM!"

"BOOM!"

"POW!"

Explosion.

I thought it was just a joke.

Now, I am ruined.

I have ruined my life—
And possibly the life of my daughter.

What am I going to do?

As I sat in that dimly lit coffee shop, watching the foam dissipate from my untouched caramel coffee, my mind spiraled into the past. How had I let it come to this? I wasn't a killer. I wasn't a terrorist. I was just an average man, desperate and naive.

The job market had been unkind. My skills, once revered, had been rendered obsolete in a world moving faster than I could catch up. It had been months of overdue bills, of my daughter looking at me with hopeful eyes, waiting for me to provide, and me failing over and over again.

Then I saw the ad.

"Looking for a quick payout? Willing to click a button to change the course of history? \$32,000 guaranteed!"

It had to be a scam. It *had* to be.

But desperation makes a man blind. It makes him reckless. It makes him stupid.

So I clicked.

At first, it was harmless. A questionnaire—where I lived, my economic status, my beliefs. Then the terms and conditions, long and filled with legal jargon that I skimmed through, agreeing to whatever it said just to get to the end.

Then, the final button.

Launch.

It didn't say what I was launching. There were no details, no consequences laid out in fine print. Just a button. A simple, stupid button.

And I pressed it.

Now, the news played endlessly on every screen around me. Reports of the devastation. Cities in ruin. Innocent lives lost. And my name, soon to be plastered alongside war criminals, extremists, and radicals.

I gripped the table, nausea rolling in my stomach. My daughter sat across from me, still looking at me with innocent, trusting eyes. She didn't know. She couldn't know.

"Dad, are you sure you're okay?" she asked again.

I forced a smile, but my hands trembled as I lifted the coffee cup to my lips.

"I'm fine, sweetheart," I lied.

Inside, I was already dead.

The weight of my actions sat heavy on my chest, suffocating me. Each breath felt like an admission of guilt. My hands, steady once, were now shaky, restless. I looked at my daughter again, her bright eyes so full of life, so free from the burdens I now carried. If she knew the truth, would she ever forgive me? Would she ever look at me the same way again?

I needed to fix this.

But how do you undo something of this magnitude? How do you atone for a crime so immense that it echoes through history? The thought of turning myself in crossed my mind. Maybe a confession would grant me some sliver of peace. Maybe the world needed to know that I wasn't some faceless villain hiding behind a screen—I was just a man who made a terrible, irreversible mistake.

But then, what would happen to her?

If I disappeared into a prison cell, who would take care of her? Who would protect her from the world, from the consequences of my actions? She didn't deserve this. I had to find another way.

I started researching, scouring the dark corners of the internet for anything—ways to disappear, ways to erase digital footprints, ways to escape the fate I had sealed for myself. Every article, every post felt futile. The reach of those in power was infinite. There was nowhere to run.

Paranoia began to settle in. Every time I stepped outside, I felt watched. Every police siren made my heart lurch in my chest. The news reports began hinting at their search narrowing. The government was tracking down those responsible. It was only a matter of time.

I needed to leave.

I pulled my daughter aside one evening, forcing a reassuring smile onto my face.

"We're going on a trip," I told her.

"A trip? Where?"

"Somewhere new. An adventure. Just you and me."

She grinned, oblivious to the storm raging inside me. "Like a vacation?"

I nodded, though this was no vacation. This was survival.

I packed what little we had, withdrew the remaining money from my account, and left behind the life we knew. We moved from city to city, never staying in one place for too long. I changed my name, grew out my beard, dyed my hair. Every step forward was a desperate attempt to stay one step ahead of the consequences chasing me.

But I couldn't run forever.

One night, as we sat in a motel room, the weight of it all came crashing down. I looked at my daughter, sleeping soundly, unaware of the chaos surrounding us. I had stolen her innocence. I had taken away her chance at a normal life.

Tears burned my eyes.

"I'm sorry," I whispered, though she couldn't hear me. "I'm so sorry."

And as the red and blue lights flashed outside our window, as the sound of boots echoed down the hallway, I knew—

It was over.

I had sealed my fate the moment I clicked that button.

I was frightened, and so it came naturally to me to rise up out of my seat and reach for the telephone. My hands trembled as I dialed the familiar number, my breath shallow and uneven. My mind raced with fear, my heart pounding in my chest as the call connected.

"Hello," I said into the receiver, my voice barely above a whisper.

"Hi," responded the comforting but concerned voice of my grandmother.

"I need you here right away!" I pleaded, desperation clawing at my throat. "I need you to take Dkaumi! I need you to take her now!"

I turned on the television, and the breaking news headline flashed across the screen in bold, glaring letters: **NUCLEAR DISASTER IN IRAN.**

My stomach twisted into knots as I watched the horrifying footage. The screen showed chaos—billowing clouds of fire and smoke consuming the Iranian airport. People were screaming, running for shelter, their faces contorted with terror. The earth shook beneath them as explosions ripped through the air.

"Blast!" "Boom!" "Pow!"

The sounds of destruction echoed in my ears as though I were right there, trapped in the inferno. My knees buckled, and I gripped the arm of the couch to steady myself. A suffocating wave of sorrow and guilt washed over me, heavier than anything I had ever known. Why did I feel this way? Was it because I was safe while so many others suffered? Because I knew that in some way, our world had changed forever? The weight of lamentation exceeded my natural senses, pressing down on my soul like an unbearable burden.

"Ahhhhhhh!" "Ahhhhhhh!" "Ahhhhhhh!" I screamed, my voice raw with agony, but there was no one to hear me. No one to stop the madness unfolding before my eyes.

Just then, a car pulled up into the driveway. I peered through the window with tear-blurred vision. My sister, Klujin Nevirted, stepped out. Her face was pale, her eyes wide with urgency. She had seen the reports on television and had come immediately.

"I'm ready to take Dkaumi to a safe place," she said firmly.

There was no time to hesitate. My daughter, my precious little girl, needed to be as far away from danger as possible. My heart clenched as I watched her gather her things, her innocent eyes filled with confusion and fear. She didn't fully understand what was happening, but she knew something was wrong.

She climbed into the car, and my sister gave me a reassuring nod before they drove away. I stood motionless in the doorway, watching until their tail lights disappeared down the street. Then, I turned back into the house, feeling hollow and lost.

The silence engulfed me. My legs gave out, and I collapsed onto the floor, my body wracked with sobs.

"Ahhhrghspm mmmnbnm huuugh," I choked on my cries, rocking back and forth as grief overtook me.

"What am I going to do?" I whispered to no one, the question hanging in the air, unanswered, as the world outside burned in chaos.

Hours passed, but time felt meaningless. I sat in the dim glow of the television, watching the destruction unfold on repeat. My mind was numb, my body drained. And yet, somewhere deep inside, a flicker of

determination ignited. I couldn't change what had happened, but I could still act. I wiped my tears, took a deep breath, and stood up. It was time to face whatever came next.

When Cats Fly and Dogs Snooze

By Ronald McDonald

I could not stop laughing! The funniest thing had just occurred—something so absurd that I wasn't sure anyone would believe me. There I was, standing in the front yard of the small home I was living in, enjoying the crisp afternoon breeze, when out of nowhere, a dog came flying through the air like it had just been shot from a circus cannon!

And right behind him? A cat.

“Ha! Ha! Ha! What the heck?” I exclaimed, wiping tears from my eyes as the absurd scene unfolded before me.

‘Thud!’ The dog landed with a hearty plop on the grass, skidding a little before coming to a lazy stop.

‘Screech!’ The cat followed shortly after, hitting the ground in a most undignified fashion, claws out and fur flying, as if trying to brake midair.

Now, these weren't just any ordinary dog and cat. These two had been at each other's throats for as long as I could remember. Barking, yowling, chasing, scratching—you name it. Day after day, they created the loudest ruckus, and today, it seemed, someone had finally had enough.

I couldn't help but feel like I was witnessing justice in its most comical form. The cat, a scraggly black-and-white creature with a perpetual look of bad luck and malnutrition, pawed at the gravel, still dazed from its unexpected flight. It had been scratching and sneaking around the house all morning, looking for weak spots to squeeze through and shady areas to hide in.

The dog, a brown mutt with floppy ears and a sleepy expression, didn't even bother to get up. He just lay there on his side, breathing heavily, as though this sort of thing happened to him all the time.

“I told you two to be quiet!” came a loud voice from the porch. The homeowner, a wiry old man with a face like a weathered prune, came stomping out of the house, broomstick in hand. He looked furious.

Without missing a beat, he marched right up to the dog and gave him a gentle whack on the rear. “Wake up, you lazy mutt!” he shouted. The dog let out a soft grunt but didn't move. He was either too tired or too indifferent to care.

Next, the man turned his attention to the cat, who had started pawing at the rocks as if trying to dig an escape tunnel.

“And you—I oughta put you on a rocket next time!” he growled, waving the broomstick menacingly. The cat hissed and bolted, sprinting halfway across the yard before stopping to glare at him from a safe distance.

I couldn't stop laughing. "How did they fly that far?" I finally managed to ask, my voice shaking with laughter.

The old man leaned on his broomstick and gave me a crooked grin. "I threw the cat," he said matter-of-factly, as though launching felines was a perfectly normal afternoon activity.

"The dog," he added with a wink, "I used a giant slingshot for."

I stared at him, dumbfounded. "A slingshot?"

He nodded proudly. "Built it myself. Tired of their noise. If you see them hanging around again, don't let 'em come back!"

"Okay," I said, still chuckling.

The old man gave a satisfied nod, then turned on his heel and went back inside, leaving me alone with the dog and cat. I glanced at the pair, who were now sitting side by side as though nothing had happened. The cat licked its paw nonchalantly, while the dog let out a big yawn and stretched lazily.

"You two are something else," I muttered, shaking my head.

As the minutes passed, I couldn't help but replay the scene in my head over and over again. The sight of that dog soaring through the air, his ears flapping like wings, followed by that scrappy little cat—it was the stuff of cartoons, not real life! Yet it had happened, right here in front of me.

Just then, the cat let out a soft meow and padded over to me, rubbing against my leg as though asking for forgiveness. The dog followed, wagging his tail and giving me a sheepish look. It was hard to stay mad at them, even after all the noise and chaos they'd caused.

"Alright, alright," I said, giving them each a pat on the head. "But you'd better behave, or next time, I might be the one with the slingshot."

They seemed to understand, because for the rest of the afternoon, they stayed quiet as mice. The cat curled up on the porch, purring softly, while the dog dozed off in the shade. Peace had finally been restored—at least for now.

Later that evening, as the sun dipped below the horizon and the sky turned a deep shade of purple, I sat on the porch and watched the world settle down for the night. The old man's house was quiet, and the yard was peaceful. It was hard to believe that just a few hours earlier, it had been the scene of such ridiculous chaos.

As I sat there, I found myself thinking about the strange little moments that make life interesting. Sometimes, it's the unexpected things—like flying dogs and grumpy old men with slingshots—that bring the most joy.

And sometimes, it's the simple things—like a quiet evening and two unlikely friends napping side by side—that remind you that, no matter how crazy life gets, there's always room for a little bit of peace.

With a smile on my face and a heart full of laughter, I leaned back in my chair and closed my eyes,
grateful for the madness and the magic of the day.

Because, in the end, it's moments like these that make life worth living.

The Pet Store

By Aputsiaq Kleist

Inside a pet store, a new routine was taking shape. It was all about the cats—cats that were going to be the rage of the decade.

“Cats! Everything about cats!” The store’s new slogan was plastered on signs throughout the shop.

The store owner, a woman from Scandinavia, was busy organizing the lizards and spiders. She carefully placed them into boxes for transport, their tiny claws scratching against the plastic walls. The store’s linoleum tiles gleamed under the bright fluorescent lights, reflecting the meticulous order she maintained.

The doors of the pet store were framed with glass and a steel aluminum alloy, contrasting with the brick and clay exterior. They whispered open with a soft ‘swish.’

“Meow!” cried a cat.

A man entered, balancing a box in his arms. He was a general attendant at the store, tasked with the care of its many creatures. Inside the box were two kittens, their small bodies pressed against each other for warmth.

“Meow!” cried the other, his tiny paws scratching at the box’s edge.

The store owner turned, momentarily distracted from her work. “Oh, my God!” she exclaimed, rushing over.

“How are you?” the man asked, setting the box down gently.

“Meow!” replied the grey kitten, blinking up at the towering humans.

‘I’m good,’ the kitten thought, nudging its sibling.

The two were a striking pair—one was a smoky grey, the other black and white with a small pink nose. Their fur was soft, and their eyes gleamed with curiosity.

“Are they from around here?” the woman asked, peering into the box.

“No, they’re new to the store,” the man replied, carefully lifting them out.

“I have so much to do,” she sighed, gesturing across the store. It stretched nearly an eighth of a mile, filled with enclosures for the store’s many animals.

The man nodded, but his attention was on the kittens. He had always had a soft spot for cats—the way they moved, the way they spoke without words. These two were already communicating, their purring and tiny meows forming an unspoken conversation.

“I like to go outside,” said the grey kitten, its ears twitching as it took in the unfamiliar surroundings.

“Is there any food?” asked the black and white kitten, its stomach giving a small rumble.

The man smiled as if he understood. There was something special about these two.

“You’ll get food soon,” he assured them, scratching the grey kitten behind the ears. It leaned into his touch, purring loudly.

The store owner, already moving on to her next task, carried the kittens to a newly prepared enclosure. It was built to match the modern aesthetic of the store, spacious and clean. She set them inside gently.

The kittens immediately began exploring, their tiny tails flicking in excitement.

“This place smells strange,” murmured the grey kitten.

“Everything smells strange to you,” teased the black and white one, batting at its sibling playfully.

They turned their heads as the man crouched by their pen, watching them with warm eyes.

“Hey there,” he said softly. “You two are something special, aren’t you?”

The kittens padded toward him, pressing their small bodies against the bars.

“I like him,” the grey one decided, nudging its nose against the man’s outstretched finger.

“He brought us here. That means he’s good,” the black and white one agreed, rubbing against the bars.

The man chuckled. “You two are going to make someone very happy.”

For the next few days, the kittens grew used to the store. They played with each other, wrestled over toy mice, and stretched out under the warm store lights. They watched the customers come and go, their tiny ears perking up whenever the man came near.

He was their favorite. He always made sure they had enough food, and he always stopped to pet them before moving on with his duties.

One evening, as the store was closing, the man lingered by their pen. The kittens curled up together, blinking sleepily at him.

“I kind of don’t want to sell you,” he admitted, running a gentle hand over their fur. “You belong with someone who really loves you.”

The grey kitten purred. “You could take us home.”

The black and white kitten yawned. “That sounds nice.”

The man sighed, as if he wished for the same thing. He gave them one last scratch behind the ears before standing up.

As he turned to leave, the kittens curled into each other, their tails wrapped together. They knew, deep down, that no matter what happened, they had already found their first home—in the heart of the man who brought them in.

Liz
by Jonathan Olvera

Liz was in the bathroom of a nightclub, her heart pounding with excitement and anxiety. She wanted to look good for all the other women in the club that night.

The mirror was extra reflective, revealing the stretch marks on her skin and the stains on her clothes. Liz splashed some water on her face, pulled on her hair, twisted it, and set it over her left shoulder. She didn't have much hair—just about nine inches of a blonde, frizzy, stylish mess.

Liz was a lesbian, and she wanted to party.

The music suddenly shifted from salsa to a more electronic, fast-paced beat.

Some meth would have been alright.

Luckily, she didn't have to go far. In the bathroom, a woman was snorting meth off a glass mirror. Liz knocked on the door and pulled out five dollars.

"Hi, can I party with you?" Liz asked.

"Sure."

The woman took a sealed bag from under her dress and poured out a small mound of meth.

Liz's excitement grew. She snorted the meth, and the effect was immediate.

Liz was flying. Liz was on ice.

She reached into her pocket, feeling the mascara brush and lipstick inside. She toyed with them for a moment before deciding, Why not?

"Thank you! That was alright!" she said, grinning. "I feel awesome!"

"I'll be around!"

She shut the door of the bathroom stall and headed for the main floor, ready to party the night away—looking different.

Boom! Boom! Boom!
The music was loud, and it became faster.

Zip! Zap! Zonk!

It was an electronic dance beat. The darkness of the scene was illuminated by a cloud of fog or smoke blowing across the room.

It smelled like tobacco, hot sugar steaming, and food.

“Whoo! Yeah!” hollered Liz. She was ready to have a good time.

There were so many women dancing, shaking their hips, and showing their breasts off to the men.

Liz was sure she could get lucky!

“What’s up?” asked a blonde woman wearing a pink shirt and athletic bottoms.

“Are you trying to get lucky?” she asked.

The blonde had a yellowish tint to her hair that matched something special about her vibe. She had small but round, noticeable breasts—like jumbo mandarins.

“What?” asked Liz. She couldn’t believe she was getting lucky so soon in the club that night.

“Do you want a man?” asked the blonde.

“No!” replied Liz.

“What are you, gay or something?” the blonde asked.

“I am a lesbian!” Liz shouted over the music.

Boom! Boom! Boom!

Tit! Tit! Tit!

The music was loud.

“I’m not gay!” the blonde replied.

“I like porn, though! I know what you need,” she said.

“My name is Dariel—like a boy.”

“Hi, Dariel! I just snorted some meth. I like porn too!” said Liz.

“Wow, that’s extreme! I just drink and like caffeine.”

“What does that do?” Dariel asked.

The dark, smoky scene shifted as lights and lasers lit up the space.

“I’m not sure,” yelled Liz.

“Let’s find out!” said Dariel.

“I have a room at the hotel down the street,” Dariel said.

“Let’s go then,” Liz replied.

The door was twenty yards from the center of the warehouse club, and they started toward it. It took four to six minutes of saying goodbye to everyone and making preparations to leave the building and head into the street.

The air was moist, and the night was crisp and cold. Winter was blowing through the city.

The road outside stretched a nice distance in both directions—east and west. The concrete path was simple to follow east, where the cracks and crevices between blocks were lined with grass, leading through a neighborhood of two-story houses and up to a five-story hotel.

“Wow, that’s nice,” said Liz.

“I know!” agreed Dariel. “I got it for myself to spend the night. I wasn’t planning on doing anything, but then I ran into you, and you’re high on meth—so now we can go together,” she expressed.

Liz’s heart was racing now. The thought of being in a hotel room with Dariel—nude, high, intoxicated, and under the influence—was thrilling. The anticipation was nearly unbearable.

“Whooo!” exclaimed Liz.

“Are you that excited?” asked Dariel.

“Yes! That club was live!”

Ten minutes of walking and making sure there would be cigarettes. (Dariel had a pack of cigarettes, and Liz had a bag of tobacco and rolling papers.)

The five-story building was tan and gray with signs of wear. A sign above the door read HOTEL, and a clerk stood at the front desk, ready to assist customers.

Together, they made quite a scene—two blondes, one with black eyes like Liz and the other with yellow-tinged whites—checking into a hotel together, ready to be together.

“What’s up, ladies? How can I help you?” asked the yellow-haired, green-eyed clerk.

“I’m here to check in,” said Dariel.

“What room?”

“Room 22,” Dariel replied.

“Does your friend have ID?”

“Yes,” said Liz.

She reached into her underwear, pulled out an ID, placed it on the counter, and framed it with her fingers for the clerk to see.

“I can see your name and age. It checks out,” said the clerk.

“Alright! Let’s go!” exclaimed Dariel.

The night was coming to an end as they passed from the lobby into the next passageway—a decorative square that led into the body of the hotel.

Room 22 was down the hallway, in the corner of the building, and up two flights of stairs.

Boom, Boom, Boom! said Liz.

“Hahaha! The music was awesome!” replied Dariel.

“Look!” Dariel pointed.

“Room 22! Let’s go inside and get nude!”

Liz agreed.

Dariel had the key tucked into her bra. The door opened, and the two immediately started undressing, throwing their clothes in decorative places.

Liz was nude, and so was Dariel.

“You’re going to have fun, aren’t you?” exclaimed Dariel with a mischievous grin.

“I like sex on meth!” Liz admitted, laughing.

“I’m not on meth, but I know you are. I can take care of you,” Dariel teased, running a finger down Liz’s arm.

Dariel suddenly grabbed two pillows from the bed and tossed one at Liz.

“First game—pillow fight!” she announced, striking a playful stance.

Liz caught the pillow and smirked. “Oh, you’re on!”

Feathers flew as they swung at each other, giggling, stumbling, and falling onto the bed in a tangle of limbs.

“Alright, round two!” Dariel gasped between laughs. She reached into the bedside drawer and pulled out a deck of cards.

“Strip poker?” Liz asked.

Dariel raised an eyebrow. “We’re already naked.”

“Then let’s make it interesting. Loser gets tickled!” Liz challenged.

The night was just beginning, filled with laughter, teasing, and a series of ridiculous, improvised games that neither of them would forget.

Tonight wasn’t just about getting lucky—it was about being wild and free.

The next scene was more interesting when Dariel said to Liz, I have something in the drawer that I want to show you. And Liz sat back down on the bed in between the pillows and Dariel opened a drawer and the dress that the hotel had provided. Dariel said. I have a dildo and it is very huge. Would you like to entuse yourself with my company? Liz said. Yes, of course, that would be awesome. And together they began to kiss.

The next scene was more interesting when Dariel said to Liz, I have something in the drawer that I want to show you. And Liz sat back down on the bed in between the pillows and Dariel opened a drawer and the dress that the hotel had provided. Dariel said. "I have a dildo and it is very huge. Would you like to entuse yourself with my company?" Liz said. "Yes! Of course, that would be awesome!" And together they began to kiss.

And so that she said, "Liz, I'm just kidding with you, but I'm going to snap your face with this dildo and reinsert it into your crotch. Would you like to be entertained with me?" Said Dariel. Liz said "Yes Dariel!, it would be the most pleasant for you to do this while I am nude on the bed." And they did so and so forth and becoming that the friction between both of them had excited this in two were almost like a scene of two Indians being in touch with each other and the nature of this sex it was exciting that they both were almost ready to burst and groan with satisfaction.

This was so loud the neighbors at the hotel could hear that both of them were kissing and naked and we're taking turns jumping on each other and the pillows and the blankets were strewn about loudly so that the neighbors began to knock "Tick, tick, tock!" "Hey, could you two keep it down?" It was so loud that Dariel and Liz were having a party and gone off the club drugs that they had taken. They were even more excited by this knock and they let out a groan in unison and Daria answered and said "Yes neighbor! I hear you! I do apologize that we are fornicating and I will keep it down!!!"

And Liz said "Hush!" "Did you tell them that we are fornicating? This is new to me!" And so Daria apologized, re inserted the dildo and Liz took a more dominant pose and she did attain a fruitful reaction out to Liz.

This was much the satisfaction of their wet pussy that they both went to sleep satisfied and this was the end of the encounter at Dariel and Liz had after the club when they did Make Love to each other like 2 virgin lesbians in the city at a hotel in a desolate town in the middle of America. Liz checked out of the hotel and Dariel stayed in the hotel. She grabbed her things, put her clothes on and walked home like it was the first time.

Zippy Zany's Clown Catastrophe

Zippy Zany

I painted my face as I started my day in front of a mirror, White embalmed pigment and red paint for my lips.

"Hey, Hey. Hey!"

"How are you!" I repeated.

I am a clown.

'Honky, Honkey, Honk.' I thought to myself.

How could I possibly fit a better image in my profession?

'By doing the ridiculous.'

"Blllphhhhfp!" I blew a raspberry to the mirror and I thought. 'I ought to do that some more.

'Next!' I thought.

'I will color my hair.'

Ready to begin my act of public disagreement and silly behavior.

I readied myself to walk out the door.

I put on my oversized shoes and I locked my house and I began my way to the store.

I walked in and I quickly headed to the hair aisle and I bought some green and yellow hair dye.

It was perfect for my character.

"How are you today sir?" The cashier asked.

"Zantasical and fantastical! Young man!"

"Good to know." Said the young man.

I grabbed my things and the change.

"Ha Ha Ha HA Ha!" I started laughing outside under the portico of the large store structure.

I had been so complicated in my search for products and I even entertained a stranger to my mode of preparation for my Clown occupation.

How hilarious!

I returned home to dye the left and right side of my hair a green and yellow color.
to make jokes and prepare my costume it was a very funny and entertaining week for me.

A Scary Story

By Jonathan Olvera

I have stories to tell you. Stories that will haunt your dreams and chill your bones.

Some are mere whispers of fear, and others... others will leave you breathless.

We, as men, must be brave, must walk through this world with our eyes wide open, unafraid. But let me tell you—ghosts, demons, they choose who will be their company.

In this life, and in the dark corners of our existence, we will encounter many things—things that claw at the edges of your soul. Ghosts. Poltergeists. Demons. Kings. Fairies. Spirits who roam the earth, leaders of our people, their existence tethered to the darkness.

They are chosen to guide us, to pull us from the torturous grasp of fear, to test our resolve.

To be afraid of the dark is to surrender.

And those who surrender... are lost.

Young man, listen closely: Nature is far more than what you see with your eyes. Nature includes us all, men and demons, shadows and light. And there is nothing more terrifying than the truth of our reality.

There are curses, hexes, spirits beyond our comprehension. And the world? It is far more than you could ever imagine. A cruel, terrifying cycle of life and death.

I warn you.

Prepare yourself.

For the physical property of eternity? It's real. It exists. And it will find you.

What's more frightening—knowing what comes tomorrow, or knowing the man you are?

This is my life, and it is now yours too.

I can begin now, for I've seen it. I've witnessed the terrible things that walk among us.

Days pass, yet time is still. A searing, barren exile in the Southwest desert. A place formed billions of years ago, but still holding the souls of the lost—the men, the animals, the very stars and suns that have fallen.

Our reality, forged in endless battles.

Titans rise. The sands of time swirl.

The wrath of God and the devil themselves, fighting to consume all existence.

The battle of creation, and the birth of death.

To capture the relics—our darkness, our doom.

They whisper questions to men.

They ask me, “What is this world?”

Terrifying storms follow me, storming through the fabric of my soul.

Can you escape it?

Women, men, and children, gathered in fear.

We must work for the king, we must labor for ourselves, to survive.

But is it right for me to exist here? Is this a trick of the devil?

I see ghosts every day, and I speak their names in silence.

Beasts, men, demons. Kings in the shadows, their presence a constant reminder of what lies beneath.

Giant lizards, creatures of the earth’s deepest nightmares. Should I be afraid?

I cannot.

I must worship my God.

To exist is my curse, my reality.

Would it be easier for me to say, "I am scared"? Yes.

Would it be easier to turn on the lights, to run and hide from the shadows that whisper at my door? Yes.

But the Legion of Shadows needs a leader.

It needs a leader who can see in the dark.

Can you see the dark? Can you withstand it?

I ask you: Have no fear.

I ask you to withstand this possession, to confront it.

How terrifying, how terrifying it is to say: “Be gone, demon.”

I can tell you, when no one else is here, when the house is still and the silence is thick, the devil knocks.

He knocks, and he asks for a blessing.

He asks to be seen by God, to be heard by the divine.

And the ghosts of men—they visit me too, in the dead of night. They ask for baptism, for salvation.

In the heat of this battle, I say, “Amen.”

Let them be seen by God, let them be heard by His council.

What is terrifying, I ask you?

Is it to help the spirits you and I both know? The ones who speak in whispers, their voices soft as a deathly breeze?

The terrible nature of sacrifice.

Praise, my friends. Praise.

I can tell you this: I was frightened. A spirit visited me one night, in my temple, and it was not a visitor you would wish to meet.

Damnation. Suffering. Sadness. A presence of despair that soaked into my bones.

But no...

I’ve been frightened before. But not anymore. I give blessings to them now, to the spirits who walk among us.

I give blessings to you, reader.

This world, this home we live in—Earth—is terrifying, but it is where we must stay.

Stay in school. Go to church. Exercise. Be brave. Listen to your parents, so that no harm may come to you.

And above all, do not fear what you cannot see

A Season of Praise

by: Jonathan Olvera

Oh give praise!
The season has changed!
The day has dimmed!
To the darkness in the sky!
The light of our Faith!
A guidance on our paths to the Lord!
Oh the labor! Oh good works!
I will walk, I will pray!
Oh! how blessed is the house of my Lord!
For my faith to give way to the fruit!
I have faith!
I will live!
The work of my church!
And the prophet it has sent!

Grow grow!
My good faith will grow!
God in heaven!
He has blessed all our homes!
All make way! All Make Way!
The christ shines it's light from above!
It is here! It is here!
A blessing and a gift from above!
My feet have been washed in the vineyard of the Lord.
I give praise! I give praise!
Be hold the work!
Of the angels!
It brings peace to my heart!
To know the season has changed!
I will rest in peace that our work will be done!
Amen.

A Season of Change

By Jonathan Olvera

Behold above, the times have changed!
The seasons will now give shade!
All the days of my time, in our faith, in the goodness of Our Lord!
We are strong!
All the angels in the sky!
They will tell the Throne of our God!
Our faith did not change!
In Our church!
Our hand did this work!
All the Heat!
All the darkness!
Oh! the church will always shine!
We give favors!
For our young!
We lend ears to the old!
All the days on the head of our church!
Our good Lord he always did count!
We rejoice!
We sing praise!
In our church we will never lose faith!

Amen.

And so, we come to the end of this collection—a woven tapestry of stories, snapshots of life and imagination, grounded in truth, elevated by wonder.

From the innocence of **Valentine's Day** to the transformation within **The Price of Growth**, from the cosmic colors of **Heaven's Treasure Box** to the laughter echoing through **Zippy Zany's Clown Catastrophe**, these stories have carried us across worlds both real and imagined. We've danced under **The Great Galactic Streak**, whispered secrets in **A Place Held Near**, and found unexpected wisdom in **Bubbles: The Chimp Who Changed My Perspective**.

We met angels hidden in plain sight, wrestled with belief in **I Hate Reading the Bible (Until I Didn't)**, and found ourselves transformed by faith, family, and fire in tales like **Rudolph's Journey**, **Santa's Promise**, and **The Spirit of Saint Nicholas in the Southwest**.

We laughed, we questioned, we marveled.

In **Whispers of Lycea**, we followed a feline on a noble mission. In **Lost in Translation, Found in Japan**, we discovered clarity in confusion. Through **Collateral Regret**, **The Well of Change**, and **The Divide**, we wrestled with choices, both ours and history's.

Every piece in this collection—from **Funny Story** to **The Talking Red Bird**, from **The Cow and the Cucumber** to **The Accidental Prophet**—is a fragment of a larger mosaic. They remind us that even the seemingly small or strange moments carry within them a deeper truth, a hidden gem, or a spark of divinity.

If you laughed, pondered, cried, or simply paused—then these stories have done their work. Like the **Thirteen Stars and the Miracle of Fire**, or **Guidance from the Heavens**, they were meant to shine for just a moment, lighting the path ahead in subtle ways.

So as we turn the final page, may you carry forward a little piece of magic, a newfound habit of wonder, and the simple, steady belief that stories—your stories—matter too.

With gratitude,
Jonathan Olvera

About the Author

Jonathan Olvera is a passionate writer and storyteller based in Phoenix, Arizona. With a background in Literature and Journalism, he has always been drawn to the power of words and their ability to connect people across cultures and experiences.

Jonathan's work often explores themes of national identity, resilience, and love, reflecting a deep understanding of the human condition. Whether through fictional worlds or poetic realism, his stories offer a window into how we endure, evolve, and hold onto hope.

When he's not writing, Jonathan enjoys exploring the desert landscapes that inspire his work, listening to world music, and reflecting on how the past and present shape who we become.